AN

HISTORICAL VIEW

OF THE

ENGLISH GOVERNMENT,

FROM THE

SETTLEMENT OF THE SAXONS IN BRITAIN

TO

THE REVOLUTION IN 1688.

To which are subjoined,

SOME DISSERTATIONS CONNECTED WITH THE HISTORY OF THE GOVERNMENT,

From the Revolution to the Present Time.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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AN

HISTORICAL VIEW

OF THE

ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.

BOOK II.

OF THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT FROM THE REIGN OF WILLIAM THE THIRD TO THE PRESENT TIME.

CHAPTER I.

Review of the Government of Ireland.

THE connection between England and Ireland, which has now ſubſiſted for many centuries, is a circumſtance of great importance in the hiſtory of theſe two countries, and cannot, with propriety, be overlooked in a political ſurvey of Great Britain.

The firſt invaſion of Ireland by the Engliſh proceeded from the rapacity of private adventurers; and had no other object but

the acquiſition of poſſeſſions in that country. Though Henry II. under whom the firſt Engliſh ſettlement was made, claimed the whole iſland as an acceſſion to his crown, and though he had been at the pains to procure a Papal bull, as a foundation for that claim, he appears to have done very little, either to aſcertain and extend the conqueſt, or to civilize the inhabitants, and reduce them under a regular government. The ſubſequent monarchs of England were equally inattentive to thoſe objects, or from peculiar embarraſſments at home, were incapable of purſuing them; ſo that the private ſettlers, in that hitherto rude country, were left, by their own efforts, to maintain their poſſeſſions, and to guard againſt the attacks of the natives. In ſuch a ſituation, it could not be expected that theſe two ſets of people would live in good neighbourhood. The Engliſh were, in reality, a band of robbers, who had ſtripped the natives of a part of their property; and by means of recruits from England, were endeavouring to avail themſelves of every opportunity of ſeizing on the whole. As the avowed purpoſe of the

the former was to invade and plunder, ſo the provocation, ſuffered by the latter, muſt have united them, not only to defend their poſſeſſions, but to revenge the injuries they had ſuſtained; and conſidering the uncultivated ſtate of the one people, with the barbarous ferocity of the other, it is not ſurpriſing, that by a long courſe of mutual depredation, they contracted a bitter and rancorous animoſity and hatred, and often conducted their hoſtilities in a manner equally inconſiſtent with the faith of treaties, and with the feelings of humanity.

The old and the new inhabitants were thus prevented from incorporating; and a line of ſeparation between them was drawn by their mutual contention and hoſtile paſſions. The latter were called the Iriſh *within the pale:* the former the Iriſh *without the pale.* The Iriſh within the pale were accounted ſubjects of the crown of England; and entitled to receive ſuch protection from the ſovereign, as could conveniently be afforded them. The Engliſh government conſidered thoſe without the

pale as aliens, from whom it indeed endeavoured to raiſe a tribute, but whom, in place of protecting it, never failed to treat as enemies, whenever diſputes aroſe between them and the other inhabitants.

The Iriſh within the pale, from their primitive connection with England, as well as from the influence and authority of her monarchs, fell under a government ſimilar, in every reſpect, to that of the mother country. They compoſed, in one view, a ſort of Engliſh province, over which the ſovereign claimed an executive power, and appointed, during pleaſure, a governor. Theſe appointments were begun by Henry II. and continued by his ſucceſſors. The country was divided into diſtricts, and committed to the care of ſheriffs. Superior courts of juſtice were likewiſe formed, upon the ſame plan with thoſe at Weſtminſter-hall.

As the Iriſh inhabitants of the pale, however, were left, in a great meaſure, to ſtruggle with the natives, and to follow ſuch meaſures, for their ſafety and proſperity, as were

were ſuggeſted by their peculiar circumſtances, they required a great council to deliberate upon their affairs, and to regulate the conduct of their executive officers. For this purpoſe an aſſembly, after the example of the Engliſh parliament, was occaſionally convened by the governor; but at what period this eſtabliſhment was completed is uncertain. Sir John Davies thinks it had no place till the reign of Edward II. about an hundred and forty years after the firſt ſettlement; but the opinion of Leland is more probable, that its commencement reaches as high as the reign of Henry II. though it was much later before the inſtitution attained a regular form.

The Iriſh parliament was early compoſed of two houſes, as in England; the Lords temporal and ſpiritual having a ſeat in the one; and the knights of ſhires, and burgeſſes, in the other: but for a long time the aſſembly was far from being numerous. Before the reign of Henry VIII. there were but twelve counties, beſides the liberty of Tipperary, and thirty-four boroughs; ſo that

that the numbers of the houſe of commons could not amount to an hundred*.

As this national aſſembly was called for the ſame purpoſes with that of England, it was wont to deliberate upon the ſame ſort of buſineſs, and to exerciſe ſimilar powers. Its interpoſitions having ariſen from a total neglect, or inability, of the Engliſh parliament to regulate the government of Ireland, the members of that aſſembly appear to have early conſidered themſelves, not as acting in any ſubordinate capacity, but as poſſeſſed of an independent authority. In conformity to this idea, we find the ſtates of Ireland as far back as the reign of Edward III. aſſerting their privilege, according to the ancient cuſtom of holding their own parliaments, and their exemption from the burden of electing and ſending any perſons to the parliaments, or councils held in England†.

* See Sir John Davies's ſpeech to the Houſe of Commons, in 1613.

† See the curious record, entitled Memoranda de Hibernia Veriment, referred to by Dr. Leland, and publiſhed in the Calendar of Ancient Charters.

With

With reſpect to the native Iriſh, or to the inhabitants *without the pale*, they ſeem to be conſidered, by many writers, as diſgraced by a greater portion of barbarity and ferocity, than the rude inhabitants of other countries. But for this opinion it is difficult to diſcover any real foundation. By their long continued quarrels and hoſtilities with the Engliſh invaders, they became doubtleſs, inured to bloodſhed, and inſtead of making progerſs in refinements and the arts, were confirmed in all the vices natural to a people unacquainted with civility and regular government. It muſt at the ſame time be acknowledged, that, from the partiality and prejudices of Engliſh hiſtorians, thoſe vices have been greatly exaggerated.

Before the reign of Henry II. Ireland had been leſs expoſed to foreign invaſion than moſt other European countries; and though the inhabitants had never attained that civilization, which the ancient Romans communicated to their conquered provinces, they had comparatively, for ſome centuries, enjoyed a degree of tranquillity, which was likely to become the ſource of improvement.

It

It appears, accordingly, that under the cloud of thick darkneſs, which hung over Europe in the ſeventh century, ſome faint rays of light were diſcovered in Ireland, where, under the protection of the Chriſtian clergy, a number of ſchools had been eſtabliſhed, and were then in a flouriſhing condition. We are informed by an hiſtorian, of no leſs authority than Bede, that, about this period, it was uſual for perſons of diſtinction, among the Anglo-Saxons, and from the continent of Europe, to retire to that iſland for the purpoſes of enjoying the comforts of a ſequeſtered life, and for obtaining the benefit of religious inſtruction from the Iriſh clergy, who, at that time, it ſeems, were diſtinguiſhed for the purity of their doctrines, and for the ſtrictneſs of their diſcipline.

The cuſtoms which antiquaries and hiſtorians have pointed out and collected, as peculiar to the Iriſh, are ſuch as indicate no uncommon degree of barbariſm and ferocity; but, on the contrary, when compared with thoſe of other nations, exhibit that ſtriking reſemblance of lines and features, which may be remarked in the inhabitants of every country

country before the advancement of arts and civilization.

The people were divided into *ſepts*, or tribes, in a great meaſure independent of one another. Each of theſe was under a chief, who conducted the members of his tribe in war, and who endeavoured to protect them, either from the attacks of their neighbours, or from the various acts of injuſtice ariſing among themſelves. In this latter capacity, the chief, agreeably to the general practice of rude nations, committed the adminiſtration of juſtice to a deputy, who received the appellation of Brehon. The Brehons were the ordinary judges in all thoſe parts of the country, where the authority of the Engliſh monarch, in judical matters, had not been eſtabliſhed. Their juriſdiction was of a ſimilar nature, and origin, to that of the *Stewarts*, whom, in the countries under the feudal ſyſtem, the barons authoriſed to diſtribute juſtice among their tenants and vaſſals.

Many different *ſepts*, inhabiting an extenſive territory were frequently aſſociated under a common leader, whoſe authority over

over this larger diviſion, though much inferior to that of each inferior chief over his own ſept, was gradually, by length of time, as well as by occaſional circumſtances, confirmed and extended. By the confederation of ſmaller into larger ſocieties, there had ariſen five large provinces, into which the whole iſland was divided. Mention is even made by hiſtorians, that theſe provinces had been occaſionally united under a king; but this union was probably ſo tranſient and ſlight as never to have beſtowed much real influence upon the nominal ſovereign.

The appropriation of land, that great ſtep in the progreſs of agriculture, appears, among the ancient inhabitants of Ireland, not to have taken place univerſally, for long after the Engliſh invaſion, they retained ſo much of the paſtoral manners, as, without confining themſelves to fixed reſidence, to wander, with their cattle, from place to place. This cuſtom known by the name of *boolying*, ſuppoſes that large commons, or tracts of unappropriated land, were extended through all the diviſions of the country; and that the waſte grounds bore a great proportion

portion to thoſe, which were employed in tillage. In all countries the acquiſition of landed property has ariſen from agriculture; for the cultivators of a particular ſpot become entitled to the immediate produce, as the fruit and reward of their labour; and, after a long courſe of cultivation, having meliorated the ſoil, were, upon the ſame principle, entitled to the future poſſeſſion of the land itſelf, by which alone they could reap the advantages derived from their paſt improvements. Thoſe lands, therefore, in Ireland, which had been employed ſolely in paſturage, muſt have remained in an unappropriated ſtate, open to the promiſcuous uſe of the whole community.

The limited and imperfect ſtate of the appropriation of land in Ireland, may be further illuſtrated from the Iriſh cuſtoms with relation to ſucceſſion. It appears that property in land was veſted in the chiefs only, or leaders of *ſepts;* and that the inferior people of the tribe were merely tenants at will. The eſtates of thoſe chiefs, however, were not tranſmitted from father to ſon by hereditary deſcent, but, upon the death

of

of the proprietor, paſſed to the eldeſt of his male relations. This perſon, by his experience in war, having uſually acquired the higheſt reputation for military ſkill, was the beſt qualified to be leader of the tribe, and the moſt capable of defending that eſtate, in which they had all a common concern. This is the cuſtom, anciently diſtinguiſhed, both in Ireland and in Scotland, by the name of *Tanſtry;* a name ſaid to be derived from the circumſtance, that, in the life time of the predeceſſor, it was common to aſcertain and acknowledge the right of his heir, who, in the Celtic language, received the appellation of the *Tanſt*, that is, the ſecond perſon in the tribe. Traces of this mode of ſucceſſion are very univerſally to be found in the early hiſtory of mankind. In that ſituation where the inhabitants of a country are almoſt continually engaged in predatory expeditions, it may be expedient that the land, poſſeſſed by thoſe little ſocieties of kindred, who reſide in the ſame neighbourhood, ſhould remain undivided under the diſpoſal of the chief; and that, in chuſing this leader, more regard ſhould be had to his

his age, experience, and military qualities, than to his blood-relation with the perſon who formerly enjoyed that office. The plan of tranſmitting inheritances, by which children, and even families, in a ſtate of infancy, ſucceed to eſtates according to ſuch rules, as are ſuggeſted by the inclination of parents, can hardly be made effectual till mankind enjoy a degree of tranquillity, and are, without any exertion of their own, protected by the public, and ſecured from depredation. The eſtabliſhment of ſuch a plan therefore, ſuppoſes conſiderable advances in the ſocial intercourſe, and a degree of improvement in many of the arts of life.

The inferior tenants, or followers of the chief, appear to have held their lands during his pleaſure; though probably theſe tenants were uſually permitted to remain in poſſeſſion during life; and upon their deceaſe, their eſtates were divided among the eldeſt males of the *ſept**. This has improperly

* See Davies's Diſcovery, 1747. p. 169.

been

been called, by ſome writers, ſucceſſion by *gavel-kind.*

In that ſimple age when landed property is, in ſome meaſure, retained in common by a whole tribe, there naturally ſubſiſts an intimate connection, and ſtrong attachment among the members of that ſmall ſociety. They live much together, are ſeparated from the reſt of the world, and aſſiſt one another in all their important tranſactions. Their affections are ſtrengthened by the habits of intimacy, and by their mutual exertions of kindneſs in promoting their common intereſt. The chief is commonly attended by a number of his kindred, and tenants, whom he entertains with ruſtic hoſpitality and magnificence, as in return, they are ambitious of diſplaying their attachment, and their own importance, by entertaining their leader. The cuſtom of viſiting his tenants, and of his being maintained, on thoſe occaſions, at their expence, to which hiſtorians have given the appellation of *coſhering*, was probably ſupported likewiſe by political conſiderations; as by making frequent progreſſes through the territories

of

of his tribe, the chief of the *ſept* was enabled to prevent diſturbance among a diſorderly people, and according to the demerits of his tenants to proportion the burden of his maintenance.

The members of every ſept were not only ſubject to the burden of maintaining their chief, when he thought proper to viſit them, but were alſo liable to contributions for defraying the expence of his maintenance when he was employed in defence of the community. Hence a foundation was laid for arbitrary exactions, diſtinguiſhed by the names of *coegite* and *livery*, which were originally Iriſh, but were afterwards adopted by the Engliſh ſettlers, and became the ſource of great oppreſſion.

The mutual attachment and confidence that ſubſiſted between the chief and the members of his tribe, are moſt eſpecially remarkable in the practice of what is called *foſtering*. It was common for the chief to give out his children, not only to be ſuckled, but even to be brought up, in the family of ſome of his tenants. To maintain ſuch children was not looked upon a burden, but

but as a mark of diſtinction; it created a new ſpecies of relation with the leader of the tribe; and enabled ſuch foſterers to acquire a peculiar intereſt in thoſe perſons, whom the whole ſociety beheld with admiration and reſpect. The practice, at the ſame time, ſhews the general ſimplicity of manners, which had introduced no idea that the ſon of a chief required an education ſuperior to what might be obtained in the houſe of his tenants.

With regard to the laws enforced by the Brehons in the diſtribution of juſtice, they were ſimilar to thoſe of the other early European nations. The weakneſs of government, in rude ſtates, by diſabling the injured party from procuring an adequate puniſhment, has generally produced a pucuniary compenſation even for the moſt atrocious offences, and the ſame intereſted motives, which determined the private ſufferer to accept of ſuch compoſitions, have alſo rendered them agreeable to the public magiſtrate, who, on the part of the community, levied the fines drawn on thoſe occaſions. Such pecuniary puniſhments are ſaid to have

been

been inflicted by the Brehons for murder, and for the greater part of crimes.

I had formerly occaſion to notice that remarkable inſtitution which took place in Ireland, by which the head of every ſept was reſponſible for the conduct of all his followers, in the ſame manner as in England, a tything man might be called to account for the offences of every member of his tything. It has been ſuppoſed, that this law was copied from the Engliſh by the inhabitants of Ireland, but, in all probability, it proceeded independent of imitation, from the ſimilarity of circumſtances in both countries; and, in reality, it ſeems agreeable to the notions of juſtice and expediency ſuggeſted by a ſtate of rudeneſs and barbariſm. The eſtate under the management of a chief, belongs, in ſome meaſure, to the whole tribe, and when any member of that ſociety commits a crime, to be expiated by a pecuniary compoſition, it is not inconſiſtent with juſtice, that this penalty ſhould be paid out of the common funds, by the perſon who repreſents the community. It is, at the ſame time, highly expedient, that thoſe who

ſuffer by the injuſtice of any obſcure member of a tribe, ſhould not be under the neceſſity of proſecuting the particular offenders, but ſhould obtain redreſs from the perſon known and diſtinguiſhed as the head of the community, who could be at no loſs to diſcover the guilty perſons, and procure from them an indemnity.

From the reign of Henry II. to the acceſſion of the houſe of Tudor, the interpoſitions of the Engliſh crown, in the government of Ireland, were feeble and tranſitory; extending commonly little farther than to the nomination of the chief executive officers. The diſtreſſes of King John, and of Henry III.; the ſchemes of Edward I. for the conqueſt of Scotland, and for the annexation of that kingdom to his Engliſh dominions; the wars carried on by the ſubſequent princes in France; with the great expence, and the numerous embarraſſments of which thoſe imprudent meaſures were productive; and laſtly, the long contention between the rival houſes of York and Lancaſter, by which England itſelf became a field of blood, and a continued ſcene of anarchy

anarchy and confuſion; all this train of vexation, enterprize, diſappointment, and diſaſter, prevented the Engliſh monarchs from ſupporting their authority in Ireland, or taking any vigorous meaſures for the reduction of that country*.

As the primitive ſettlers from England derived little or no aſſiſtance from the government, they were, on the other hand, ſubject to no limitation with reſpect to the extent of their acquiſitions. They found no difficulty in obtaining grants of thoſe lands of which they had ſeized the poſſeſſion, and even of ſuch territories beyond the pale, as they had formed the project of acquiring. Immenſe donations were thus

* So little were the Iriſh apprehenſive of incurring the diſpleaſure of England, that when Richard, Duke of York, with his followers, had been declared rebels, and attainted by the Engliſh parliament, they were treated in Ireland with the utmoſt hoſpitality; by an expreſs act of parliament, they were taken under the public protection; and ſome of them being attached, in conſequence of the Engliſh attainder, the perſon, who had ventured to execute the king's writ, was condemned and put to death. The ſame parliament afterwards declared, that Ireland is governed by its own legiſlature only; and that the inhabitants of that country are not ſubject to the juriſdiction of any foreign tribunal.—*See Leland's Hiſtory of Ireland.*

nominally made to a few individuals, in ſo much that while in reality no more than a third part was in poſſeſſion of the Engliſh, the whole kingdom is ſaid to have been parcelled among ten proprietors. Nothing could be more adverſe to the cultivation of the country, and the civilization of the inhabitants, than this prodigious extent of property beſtowed upon thoſe who had already the chief power in their hands. Theſe great lords not only were incapable of managing the vaſt eſtates already in their poſſeſſion, but were intereſted to prevent the remainder from being given either to the native Iriſh, or to ſuch new Engliſh planters as might be willing to improve it. In conſequence of theſe grants there came to be in Ireland, at one time, no leſs than eight counties palatine, each of which was governed by a ſort of independent ſovereign*.

Notwithſtanding theſe obſtacles, many deſperate Engliſh adventurers, at different times, obtained from the crown particular grants of territories beyond the pale, and endeavoured to maintain by force what they had occupied under the colour of a legal

* See John Davies's Diſcovery.

ſanction.

ſanction. The families of theſe people, after a long courſe of war and rapine, degenerated by degrees from the Engliſh cuſtoms, and by mutual intercouſe, were at length ſo incorporated with their neighbours as to be no longer diſtinguiſhable, by any marks of greater civilization. Upon the whole it is obſervable, that the native Iriſh, by their power and by their numbers, had more influence in changing the manners of the new inhabitants than the latter, in communicating their improvements to the former: and that the people of Engliſh race, whether within or without the pale, were in the courſe of ſome centuries, apparently declining to a ſtate of rudeneſs and barbariſm.

The acceſſion of Henry VII. as it reſtored peace and tranquillity to England, ſo it enabled the ſovereign to plan and execute more effectual meaſures for the adminiſtration of his Iriſh dominions. It produced, at the ſame time, an exaltation of the prerogative, the effect of which was diſtinctly felt in both countries. In Ireland, two objects appear to have been immediately in the view of the crown; to extend a regular policy over the country; and to render the

Iriſh

Iriſh government ſubordinate to that of England.

To promote the former of theſe purpoſes, under the direction of Sir Edward Poynings, the lord-deputy, it was provided by an act of the Iriſh parliament, that all the ſtatutes lately made in England, of a public nature, ſhould be held effectual and valid in Ireland. An extenſive improvement was thus introduced at once into the latter country, by aſſimilating its political ſyſtem to that of England. It has been juſtly obſerved, however, by a late hiſtorian, that this adoption of Engliſh laws, by the Iriſh parliament, was not unprecedented, and that in particular, another inſtance of it occurs in the reign of Edward IV. though it is highly probable that it had proved ineffectual. It has, at the ſame time, been erroneouſly ſuppoſed by ſome writers, that this act extended to the whole code of Engliſh ſtatutes; whereas, in reality, it refers only to a certain number, which, however inaccurately ſpecified, were under the eye of the Iriſh legiſlature.

From this regulation, it may fairly be concluded that the Iriſh parliament was, at this time, underſtood to poſſeſs an indepen-

dent legiſlative authority. If that aſſembly was capable of adopting the laws of England, it muſt have had the power alſo of rejecting them. And as this act of the legiſlature ſufficiently teſtifies the exertion of independence upon the part of Ireland, ſo the aſſent of the governor, upon the part of the king, leaves no room to doubt of his majeſty's approbation and concurrence.

To ſecure the dependence of the Iriſh parliament upon the crown, Henry endeavoured to acquire a negative before debate upon all their determinations. For this purpoſe he procured from that aſſembly a regulation, that no parliament ſhould be held in Ireland until the lord-deputy and his council ſhould certify to the king and council in England, the cauſes for which the meeting was to be called, and the bills which were therein to be enacted; and that unleſs the king's leave were previouſly obtained, the tranſactions of any future parliament ſhould be void in law.

The intereſt of the crown required that all debates in parliament, which might inflame the minds of the people, ſhould be ſuppreſſed, and that the king ſhould not be put

put to the diſagreeable neceſſity of rejecting a bill, which, by a previous diſcuſſion, had become a popular meaſure. Even in England ſuch diſcuſſions were often attended with troubleſome conſequences; and they were likely to be more ſo in Ireland, where from the diſtance of the ſovereign, his private influence could not be ſo ſpeedily exerted.

In the reign of Queen Mary an extenſion was made of this law, by requiring that not only the acts in contemplation at the calling of parliament, but thoſe alſo which might be propoſed after the meeting of that aſſembly, ſhould, in like manner, be certified to the king and council in England, and previouſly to their becoming the ſubject of deliberation ſhould obtain the royal approbation.

From the progreſs of an independent ſpirit at a later period, an expedient for avoiding this law was eaſily ſuggeſted. Though parliament, without the concurrence of the ſovereign, could not introduce a bill for a new law, it was thought they were not reſtrained from deliberating in any caſe, whether

whether a propoſal for ſuch a bill ſhould be certified to the king and council; and, in this view, under the colour of heads of a bill to be propoſed in future, every argument that could be advanced in ſupporting or in oppoſing the bill itſelf, might be introduced and conſidered. By ſuch a preliminary debate, the public attention to the meaſure propoſed might be excited no leſs effectually, and their opinions and ſentiments with regard to it might be diſcovered no leſs clearly, than if the bill, after undergoing all the neceſſary ceremonials, had been regularly preſented to the two houſes for their determination.

The religious reformation in the reign of Henry VIII. became the ſource of new animoſities in Ireland, more bitter and rancorous than thoſe which had formerly ſubſiſted. In that country, literature had made too little progreſs to create a ſpirit of liberty in matters of religion, and a diſpoſition to pull down that edifice, which, in a courſe of ages, had been reared by ignorance and ſuperſtition. The people content to be guided implicitly by their religious teachers, had no diſpoſition to pry into myſteries, or to call

call in queſtion the ceremonies and obſervances which a deſigning prieſthood had eſtabliſhed among their forefathers. Warmly attached to the ancient ſyſtem of religion, they were taught to believe that nothing could be more meritorious than to hazard their lives in its defence. The political circumſtances at the ſame time, which, in ſome other parts of Europe, had begun to promote the freedom and independence of the great body of the people, had hitherto no place in Ireland. Arts and manufactures had not there made ſuch progreſs as to produce a degree of luxury, and to multiply tradeſmen and artificers. Men of great property had not, by an increaſe in the expence of living, been induced to diſcard their idle retainers, and with a view of obtaining an advancement of rent, to grant long leaſes to their tenants. The peaſantry were ſtill abſolutely dependent upon their maſters; the members of every great family, or ſept, were invariably attached to their chief. The great wealth in the poſſeſſion of churchmen, by which, like the temporal lords, they were enabled to maintain a number of dependents, was not ſquandered in procuring

ing luxuries, but expended, the greater part of it, in acts of hoſpitality and charity, which commanded univerſal reſpect and veneration. Their juriſdiction and authority, as barons, not having as yet ſuffered any diminution, continued to operate in addition to the influence ariſing from the reputed piety of their lives, the ſacred functions committed to them, and their ſituation as members of that great ſyſtem of eccleſiaſtical power, which the Roman pontiff had eſtabliſhed. Thus, in Ireland, the religious reformation might be regarded as an exotic, for which the ſoil, at that time, was totally unprepared, and which could only be raiſed by artificial and violent means. If, by the utmoſt care and culture, it had been made to take root, there was reaſon to fear that, when left to itſelf, it would immediately decay, and be overgrown and choked up by the native weeds of the country.

The authority, and the violent temper of Henry VIII. were indeed ſucceſsful in procuring, from the Iriſh parliament, a renunciation of the papal juriſdiction, an acknowledgment of the King's ſupremacy, and the ſuppreſſion

ſuppreſſion of religious houſes. But, notwithſtanding theſe compliances with the humour of the king, the people in general, and even a great proportion of both houſes of parliament, were zealouſly attached to the ancient faith. Theſe Roman Catholics, it may eaſily be ſuppoſed, were highly enraged at the late innovations, diſſatisfied with every meaſure of a government ſo hoſtile to their religion, and ready to embrace every opportunity of creating diſturbances. The emiſſaries of Rome, in the mean time, were not idle, and ſpared no pains to cheriſh and inflame theſe diſpoſitions. To the inhabitants of Engliſh race, it was obſerved, that their title to ſettle in the country, was entirely founded upon a donation from the pope. To ſooth the vanity, and to excite the ſuperſtitious and bigoted zeal of the native Iriſh, this was repreſented as the favourite iſland of his holineſs; the peculiar ſeat of the pure catholic religion, upon the fidelity and ſteadineſs of which, according to ancient propheſies, depended the glory and proſperity of the Chriſtian church. That the enemies of the late innovations, however numerous

and hoſtile to each other, might act in concert, the agents of Rome maintained a regular correſpondence with the different *ſepts*, opened a channel of communication through the remoteſt parts of the country, and exhorted the leading people to lay aſide their private jealouſies, and to unite in one great cauſe, the defence of their common religion.

Theſe diſpoſitions of the Iriſh gave riſe to various combinations and attempts againſt the government, which, according to circumſtances, were more or leſs formidable; but were uniformly ſucceeded by forfeitures, calculated to gratify the friends and connections of the ruling party. The reign of Elizabeth produced in Ireland no leſs than three rebellions; which might be attributed almoſt entirely to the ſtate of religious differences. The firſt was excited by John O'Neale, chief of the powerful tribe of that name, who exerciſed a ſort of ſovereign power in Ulſter. This rebellion was ſuppreſſed by the vigour and dexterity of Sir Henry Sidney, the lord-deputy; and, though it occaſioned a public declaration of many forfeitures, theſe were not carried into

into execution, but ſuffered to fall into oblivion. Another inſurrection, ſoon after, was produced in the ſouthern part of the iſland, by the Earl of Deſmond, the head of the great family of Fitz-Gerald, a nobleman, whoſe anceſtors had long poſſeſſed an authority too great for a ſubject. The King of Spain, thinking this a proper opportunity for retaliating the aſſiſtance given by Queen Elizabeth to his rebellious ſubjects in the Netherlands, ſent a military force to act in concert with the Iriſh inſurgents; but, fortunately, the abilities of Deſmond were not equal to ſuch an undertaking, and, after a ſeries of miſcarriages, he was deſerted by his followers, and loſt his life, without the credit of diſtinguiſhing himſelf by any brilliant action. The ſuppreſſion of this rebellion was attended with forfeitures to a great extent, and drew from England a large colony to ſettle in Munſter. Eſtates were offered to the ſettlers at the ſmall rent of three-pence, and, in ſome caſes, of two-pence the acre; each purchaſer being bound to plant a certain number of families within his domain. Sir Walter Raleigh,

Raleigh, Sir Chriſtopher Hatton, and many other perſons of diſtinction, obtained grants of eſtates upon ſuch terms; but, though they occupied the lands, they were not very ſcrupulous in fulfilling the conditions.

The laſt rebellion in this reign, and by far the moſt formidable, was that conducted by Hugh, another branch of the family of O'Neale, who, together with the chief-ſhip, had now obtained his father's title, that of Earl of Tirone. This leader, in abilities and education, was much ſuperior to the other chiefs of the mere Iriſh. He had ſerved in the Engliſh army; and, as he had become acquainted with the cuſtoms of the Engliſh, was equally capable of recommending himſelf to them, and to his own countrymen, by aſſuming occaſionally the manners and deportment of either. With an inſinuating addreſs, joined to the moſt profound diſſimulation, he gained the confidence of the Engliſh governors, and even of the Queen herſelf; while, by ſecret practices, he inflamed the diſcontents of his countrymen, and prepared them for an inſurrection. Even, after he had recourſe to arms,

arms, he, by various excuſes, by affected complaints of injuſtice, and by repeated pretences of ſubmiſſion, found means to amuſe the government, and to procure the delays neceſſary for bringing his plans to maturity. The King of Spain ſent once more a body of troops to ſupport the rebels; which gave ſuch encouragement to the mal-contents, as to render the inſurrection almoſt univerſal. An army of twenty thouſand men from England was thought neceſſary to ſupport the government; and even over this force the rebels gained many advantages. At length, however, by the activity and judicious conduct of Lord Mountjoy, the governor, their force was broken, and they were completely defeated. Tirone ſubmitted at a very critical period, when the death of Elizabeth was known to the Iriſh adminiſtration, but was ſtill kept a ſecret from the reſt of the inhabitants. Thus the proſperous reign of that princeſs was terminated by an event of the utmoſt importance to her ſubjects, the reſtoration of peace and tranquillity of Ireland, and the eſtabliſhment, over all her dominions, of a degree

degree of religious liberty, to which, for many centuries, they had been altogether ſtrangers.

The acceſſion of James I. produced an era no leſs remarkable, in the hiſtory of Ireland, than in that of England and Scotland. By the union of the Engliſh and Scottiſh crowns, by the cordial acquieſcence of the whole nation in the title of their new ſovereign, and, above all, by the entire ſubjection of the Iriſh chiefs in the late reign, James found himſelf in a better condition than any of his predeceſſors, for communicating the Engliſh juriſprudence to Ireland, and for extending the advantages of regular government and civilized manners to that hitherto uncultivated and intractable part of his dominions.

The firſt ſtep, in the courſe of theſe improvements, was to reduce the whole country under tribunals modelled upon the Engliſh plan. The authority of the Brehons had ſtill continued in force, in moſt parts of the kingdom; and their deciſions, as might be expected, were agreeable to the ancient Iriſh cuſtoms. To theſe judges,

and to their peculiar forms of procedure, the people were zealouſly attached, and every attempt to overturn this early inſtitution was treated as a dangerous innovation. So late as the reign of Elizabeth, when Fitz-William, the governor, informed Mac-Guire, the chieftain of Fermanaugh, that he intended to ſend a ſheriff into his territories, the chief replied, without heſitation, "Your ſheriff ſhall be welcome, but "let me know his *erie*, that, if my people "ſhould cut off his head, I may levy it upon "the country." The whole country was now divided into thirty-two counties, which were put under the ſuperintendence of ſheriffs, and ſubjected to the juriſdiction of itinerant courts. By this reformation, people of the lower ranks were protected from thoſe numerous exactions, which their ſuperiors had formerly impoſed upon them, and began to taſte, in ſome meaſure, the bleſſings of ſecurity and freedom. The inhabitants were thus comforted for the loſs of their barbarous uſages, by the evident advantages reſulting from the new regulations; and if they were denied the privilege of plundering

ing their neighbours, had, in return, the ſatisfaction of being leſs expoſed to theft and robbery, or to perſonal injury. The change at firſt, was poſſibly not reliſhed; but it could not fail in time to become palatable. It reſembled the tranſition from poverty to riches; from hunger and hard fare, to plenty and delicacy.

Another great object, eſſential to the future tranquillity of Ireland, was the ſettlement of landed property. From the frequency of rebellions and diſorders many forfeitures had occurred: and the ſame eſtates had paſſed through a number of different families. In ſuch a ſituation, there came to be much room for diſpute, concerning the property of eſtates; while, in ſome caſes, the validity of the forfeitures was called in queſtion; in ſome, the pretended grants from the crown were liable to challenge; and, in others, the right of the preſent poſſeſſor was confirmed by ſuch a length of time, as might appear to ſupply the defects of the original titles. For putting an end to the numberleſs controverſies that might ariſe in ſuch caſes, certain com-

miſſioners were appointed by the crown to examine defective titles of ſuch perſons as held lands by the Engliſh forms; and the poſſeſſors were invited to ſurrender their eſtates into the hands of the governor, in order to obtain a new and more legal grant. The governor was likewiſe empowered to accept ſurrenders from thoſe Iriſh lords, who held their eſtates by the ancient precarious tenure uſual in Ireland, and, under certain precautions and regulations, to reinveſt the poſſeſſor according to the common law of England, with a full and complete right of property. Care was taken, at the ſame time, to limit the new grants to the actual poſſeſſions of the claimants; as alſo to ſecure the inferior tenants, and to convert their former uncertain ſervices and duties into a fixed pecuniary payment. The old cuſtom of *tanyſtry* was thus aboliſhed, and, according to the new grants, eſtates became univerſally tranſmiſſible to heirs.

A regulation, ſomewhat ſimilar to this, had been attempted, by an act of parliament in the reign of Elizabeth; but, from the circumſtances of the nation at that period,

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it could not be made effectual *. The extenſive diſpoſal of property, which it now occaſioned, and the proportionable influence, which it beſtowed upon the crown, may eaſily be conceived. The determination of the commiſſioners could ſo little be ſubjected to any general rules, that every perſon muſt have conſidered himſelf as indebted to government, for the eſtate, which he was allowed to obtain or to preſerve, and felt *himſelf under* the neceſſity of yielding an implicit ſubmiſſion to ſuch terms as the executive power thought proper to demand.

In this ſtate of the country, Tirone, and his principal adherents, who had formerly ſubmitted to government, were alarmed by the ſuſpicion of ſome new inſurrection, and fled to the Continent; upon which their immenſe poſſeſſions were confiſcated. There fell thus into the hands of the crown an extent of territory, in the ſix northern counties, amounting to about 500,000 acres, in the ſettlement of which more moderate portions were aſſigned to individuals, and

* Davies.

more

more effectual precautions were taken to avoid abuſes, than had occurred on former occaſions.

The city of London became undertakers in this new ſettlement, and obtained large grants in the county of Derry. Upon pretence of protecting this infant plantation, though, in reality, with a view of raiſing money, the King inſtituted the order of Iriſh baronets, or knights of Ulſter, from each of whom, as was then done in Scotland, with reſpect to the knights of *Nova Scotia*, he exacted a certain ſum, in conſideration of the dignity to be conferred.

The regulations, for the ſecurity of landed poſſeſſions, introduced at this period, and thoſe for the extenſion of law and regular government, were followed, in Ireland, by the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity for near forty years, during which, conſiderable advances were made in agriculture and even in manufactures. In the reign of Charles I. the vigorous, though ſomewhat oppreſſive adminiſtration of Sir Thomas Wentworth, contributed much to the progreſs of theſe improvements. By his immediate

diate encouragement, and even by his example, the linen manufacture was introduced, and has ever ſince, though with ſome interruptions, continued in a ſtate of advancement.

The great object of this able but iniquitous governor, was the improvement of the revenue. As the forfeiture of Deſmond had given riſe to an extenſive Engliſh ſettlement in the ſouthern, and that of Tirone and his adherents in the northern part of Ireland, it was now thought expedient that a ſimilar plantation ſhould be effected in Connaught. For this purpoſe, the validity of titles to eſtates, in that part of the iſland, was called in queſtion; various objections to the right of many individua's were ſtarted; and theſe being referred to the commiſſioners appointed for the trial of ſuch caſes, were very generally ſuſtained. Where the juries employed in trying the facts ſhewed reluctance, recourſe was had to promiſes, threats, and even to ſevere puniſhments, for procuring a verdict in favour of the crown. The arbitrary and tyrannical meaſures of the governor, on theſe occaſions, were carried

ried to ſuch a pitch, as excited the higheſt indignation; but, at the ſame time, they were proſecuted with ſuch impetuoſity and ſteadineſs as bore down all oppoſition, and, in the counties of this weſtern diviſion, brought an extenſive territory under the diſpoſal of government.

In the diſputes between Charles I. and his people, the Iriſh parliament took party with the latter, and entered into ſimilar meaſures with thoſe purſued in England, for preventing the arbitrary exertions of prerogative. In the year 1640, the commons in Ireland refuſed the ſubſidies demanded by government, objected to the modes of taxation hitherto practiſed, and preſented to the lord-deputy a remonſtrance, complaining of grievances.

Although the inhabitants of Ireland had not, at this period, carried their improvements in trade and manufactures to ſuch a height, as could raiſe the great body of the people to the ſame condition of independence as in England, yet the planters of Engliſh race, thoſe adventurers, who, by the favour of government, had obtained eſtates

eſtates in Ireland, and had been willing to encounter the hazards of ſettling in that country, amid the rage and reſentment of the former poſſeſſors, were in general, we may ſuppoſe, men of a bold ſpirit and of independent principles. Theſe were the people, who, by their opulence, and by their powerful connections in England, poſſeſſed the chief influence over the determinations of the Iriſh legiſlature; and who, as they had caught the enthuſiaſtic love of freedom, which now pervaded the Engliſh nation, were chiefly inſtrumental in diffuſing the ſame ſentiments through the ſiſter kingdom.

The ſame difference of opinion in religious matters, which had ariſen in England, and in Scotland, found their way alſo into Ireland, and contributed to influence their political ſentiments. Among thoſe of the proteſtant perſuaſion, the two great ſects of Preſbyterians and Independents, whom their adverſaries diſtinguiſhed by the contemptuous appellation of Puritans, and of whom, the latter rejected all eccleſiaſtical authority, the former, all ſubordination of ranks

ranks among churchmen, formed a natural alliance with the friends of civil freedom; and their tenets in religion were even adopted by a great part of thoſe individuals, who obtained an aſcendency in parliament.

On the other hand, the ſupporters of the hierarchy, the Roman Catholics and the members of the eſtabliſhed church, who, though differing in many religious tenets, agreed in their ardent zeal for promoting the power of churchmen, and for placing the management and controul of that power in the hands of a ſingle perſon; all theſe, by the tenor of their eccleſiaſtical ſyſtem, were hoſtile to the deſigns of parliament, and willing to exalt the prerogative. As the King could not fail to diſcover theſe diſpoſitions, which prevailed among the different claſſes of the people, he could hardly avoid ſhewing favour to ſuch as were ſubſervient to his views; and, in particular, affording protection and relief to the Roman Catholics from the hardſhips of thoſe penal ſtatutes, to which, by their non-conformity, they were expoſed. This partiality, naturally became the ſource of jealouſy and diſguſt

diſguſt in the one party, of gratitude and attachment in the other.

* Such, in both countries, was the ſtate of the two great political parties; but, in Ireland, there was better ground than in England for entertaining an apprehenſion and jealouſy of the Roman Catholics, as, compared with them, the Proteſtants, though, in ſome degree, maſters of the government, were no more than a handful of people. Their diſtance from the chief ſeat of the executive power, and the ſubor-

* It was the object of Charles to remove, by degrees, the differences that ſubſiſted between the ſyſtem of the eſtabliſhed church and that of the Roman Catholics, and to beſtow upon the former that authority, and that influence over the people, which were enjoyed by the latter. For this purpoſe, with the advice and aſſiſtance of Laud, he had introduced in England a new ſet of eccleſiaſtical canons, intended to new-model the diſcipline of the church; and a new liturgy, calculated, by a number of external ceremonies, to impreſs the multitude with ſuperſtitious awe and veneration, and to produce a blind ſubmiſſion to their ſpiritual guides. The ſame innovations were extended to Ireland, with a few variations accommodated to the circumſtances of the country: and, to render the King abſolute in eccleſiaſtical matters, the convocation was armed with the ſame powers as in England.

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dinate authority poſſeſſed by a lord-deputy, rendered, at the ſame time, the prevailing party in parliament, leſs capable of enforcing their determinations, or of keeping their enemies in ſubjection.

While the popiſh recuſants in Ireland, were ſo formidable by their numbers, they were highly provoked and irritated againſt the ruling party. Many of them had been unjuſtly deprived of their poſſeſſions, to make way for the needy favourites of adminiſtration; and even thoſe, who had been allowed to retain their eſtates, were, in return, ſubjected to ſuch regulations and conditions, as curtailed their ancient privileges, and rendered them dependent upon government. For continuing to profeſs the religion of their forefathers, they were expoſed to endleſs proſecution, and reduced under the dominion of heretics, whom they abhorred, and whoſe damnable errors they deteſted. Thoſe hardſhips they imputed, not to the King, whoſe diſpoſition to relieve them was abundantly manifeſt; but to that governing party, in the Engliſh and Iriſh par-

parliaments, which oppoſed and fruſtrated his benevolent purpoſes.

From ſuch views and circumſtances proceeded, ſoon after, the Iriſh rebellion, planned by the abilities of Roger Moore, in which the rage of diſappointed bigotry, under the guidance of a ſenſeleſs barbarian, Sir Phelim O'Neale, perpetrated that horrid maſſacre, ſo diſgraceful to the annals of Ireland. The diſorders of England, at that time, were ſuch as to prevent the interference of government for ſuppreſſing this alarming inſurrection. The chief executive power had been committed to two juſtices, Borlace and Parſons, men totally deſtitute of the capacity and firmneſs requiſite in the preſent emergency. There was no military force to ſtop the progreſs of the inſurgents, who had leiſure to collect their whole ſtrength, and to form a regular aſſociation over the whole kingdom. Their clergy held a general ſynod, in which they framed a variety of acts, and declarations, calculated to unite the whole Roman Catholic intereſt both at home and abroad. They were joined by the nobility and gentry, in con-

ſtituting a permanent national aſſembly, for the regulation and ſuperintendence of their future concerns.

At the firſt inſurrection, O'Neale pretended, that he was acting by the authority of Charles; and, to gain belief, produced, in writing, an expreſs commiſſion from the King. But the forgery of this deed ſeems now to be univerſally admitted. Whether any ſecret encouragement, however, had been given to this inſurrection, by Charles, or by his Queen, a zealous Roman Catholic, it ſeems more difficult to determine. It is certain, that, in the courſe of the civil war, the inſurgents uniformly profeſſed their intention to ſupport the intereſt of the crown; and that Charles regarded them as friends, from whom, in his utmoſt extremity, relief and aſſiſtance might be expected. In this view, he employed the Earl of Antrim to raiſe troops in Ireland; and that nobleman, having taken the oath preſcribed by the confederated rebels, procured a body of 3000 men, who were tranſported into Britain for the King's ſervice. A commiſſion from Charles, at a later period, was granted

granted to the Earl of Ormond, the lord-deputy, with diſcretionary powers for entering into a treaty with the Iriſh rebels, that, in return for the privileges to be beſtowed upon them by the crown, they ſhould ſend into Britain a body of 10,000 troops, to be employed in the royal cauſe. But that the nature of this tranſaction might be kept more ſecret, the King ſoon after employed the Earl of Glamorgan, a zealous Roman Catholic, to treat with thoſe confederates, promiſing, upon the word of a king, to ratify and perform whatever terms that nobleman ſhould think proper to grant. The treaty which took place, in conſequence of this commiſſion, had been concealed with care, and having been diſcovered, by an unforeſeen accident, was found to contain ſuch conceſſions to the Roman Catholics, as afforded great ſcandal to the friends of Charles. Glamorgan was accuſed of having exceeded his powers, and thrown into priſon. But an accuſation ſo improbable was not likely to remove the impreſſion, which the public received from the whole circumſtances of the tranſaction.

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The reduction of Ireland, by Oliver Cromwell, and the officers whom he employed, for that purpose, gave rise to new forfeitures, and to a new distribution of lands among English adventurers. By the arrangements attempted on this occasion, it was in view to separate the English from the Irish proprietors; and to confine the latter to the province of Connaught.

In the reign of Charles II. and of James II. the apparent designs of the Monarch, in favour of the Roman Catholics, continued the old prepossession and prejudices among religious parties, and secured the great body of the Irish in the interest of these two princes. The effect of this attachment was evident from the difficulty, with which the nation was reduced under the government of William III.

When the government had been completely settled after the Revolution in 1688, it was to be expected that Ireland, as well as England, would reap the benefit of political freedom, and that it would experience a rapid advancement in the arts. Its advances, however, since that period, though certainly

certainly very conſiderable, have been retarded by a variety of circumſtances.

1. The inhabitants of Ireland have been more divided by mutual animoſity and diſcord than thoſe of moſt other countries. From the invaſion of Henry II. to near the end of the laſt century, the natives were ſubject to continual depredation from the Engliſh government, and from thoſe adventurers of the Engliſh race, who had ſuch intereſt with the government, as enabled them, upon various pretences, to diſpoſſeſs the ancient proprietors, and to ſeize their eſtates. The reſentment occaſioned by theſe acts of injuſtice and oppreſſion, the revenge inflicted by the ſufferers, whenever they had an opportunity, the remembrance of paſt injuries upon either ſide, and the conſtant apprehenſion of the future, could not fail to produce a rooted averſion between the two parties, and to excite the bittereſt hatred and rancour.

The religious differences, from the time of Henry VIII. became a freſh ground of diſſenſion, a new ſource of animoſities, which flowed in the ſame channel with the

former. The ruling party in Ireland em braced the doctrines of the reformation Thoſe, who had little connection with government adhering to the religion of their anceſtors, again found themſelves, upon this account, oppreſſed and perſecuted, by the ſame claſs of people to whom they imputed the loſs of their poſſeſſions.

As the people, who had thus been ſubjected to oppreſſion, both in temporal and ſpiritual matters, were by far the moſt numerous, they were able to ſtand their ground, and were always formidable to their adverſaries. While the one party were ſupported by the civil magiſtrate, the other were ſuperior by their natural ſtrength; whence they maintained a conſtant ſtruggle, by which their paſſions were kept awake, and their hopes and fears alternately excited. Their mutual apprehenſion and diſtruſt, therefore, were too powerful to permit their uniting cordially in any common meaſures; and their mutual animoſity and jealouſy rendered them frequently more intent upon diſtreſſing and humbling each other,

other, than in proſecuting any ſcheme of national improvement.

The attention of the Iriſh was, in this manner, wholly engroſſed by political and religious diſputes; and their minds embraced thoſe objects with a degree of ardour and vehemence unknown in other countries. The ſame ardent ſpirit raiſed by the continual ferment, which thoſe intereſting objects had excited, was, at the ſame time, diffuſed through the whole of their conſtitution, and gave a peculiar direction to the national character. A temper, ardent and vehement, a diſpoſition open, forward, undeſigning, and ſincere, little corrected by culture, might be expected to produce incorrectneſs of thought and expreſſion, with a tendency to ſuch inaccuracies and blunders as proceed from ſpeaking without due conſideration, and from attempting to convey a firſt impreſſion, without a full examination of particulars. After all, the ſtrictures of the Engliſh upon the character and manners of their neighbours in Ireland, like all other obſervations tending to gratify national vanity and prejudice, muſt be

received with grains of allowance, and, if not reſtricted to the lower claſſes of the people, muſt be acknowledged, at leaſt, more applicable to the inhabitants of the laſt century, than to thoſe of the preſent.

2. At the time when Ireland came to be in a condition to puſh her trade and manufactures, ſhe was checked by the mercantile regulations of the Engliſh government.

The mercantile ſyſtem of all nations has been built upon the narrow baſis of monopoly. Every company, or corporation of merchants or manufacturers, has endeavoured to exclude all their neighbours from their own branches of trade or manufacture. From their ſituation, living in towns, and capable, with eaſe, of combining together, they have commonly been enabled, by their own clamours and ſolicitations, to intimidate or to perſuade the government to fall in with their deſigns, and to make regulations for ſupporting their intereſt. When Britain came to have colonies, ſhe endeavoured, by authority, to engroſs their trade, and to hinder them from trading directly with

with other nations. With reſpect to Ireland, ſhe proceeded upon ſimilar principles.

To prevent the Iriſh from interfering in the woollen manufacture, the great ſtaple of England, the Iriſh were prohibited from exporting wool or woollen cloth. To the linen trade of Scotland the ſame attention was not paid, and the exportation of Iriſh linens was permitted to Britain and her coloniès.

By what is called the *Navigation Act*, made in the reign of Charles II. and varied by ſubſequent ſtatutes, it is provided, that no goods, except victuals, ſhall be ſhipped from Ireland for his Majeſty's plantations, and that no plantation-goods ſhall be carried to Ireland without being firſt landed in Britain. By a later ſtatute, this prohibition, as to goods not enumerated, was removed.

3. To enforce regulations of ſo oppreſſive a nature, it was neceſſary that the Iriſh government ſhould be rendered entirely ſubordinate to that of England; and accordingly, no efforts for that purpoſe were wanting. By what is called Poyning's law, an attempt was

was made to inveſt the crown with a power of controuling and directing the deliberations of the Iriſh parliament. In critical emergencies, however, the operation of this law, was, afterwards, occaſionally ſuſpended; and, at length, as has been formerly hinted, a method was diviſed of entirely evading its effect, by the practice of debating upon the *heads* of ſuch bills, as were to be tranſmitted to England for obtaining the conſent of the king and council.

How far the inhabitants of Ireland were bound by the acts of the Britiſh legiſlature, was a queſtion, which, from the time of the revolution, came to be much agitated by lawyers and politicians. Thoſe, who maintained the affirmative, among whom we may reckon almoſt all the Engliſh lawyers, appear to have reſted their opinion chiefly on what is called the *right of conqueſt*. By virtue of his conqueſt of Ireland, Henry II. and his ſucceſſors, acquired a dominion over that country, and a right of ſubjecting its government to that of his own kingdom. Such, in fact, was underſtood to be

the

the nature of the Iriſh government. Though the nation was allowed to hold parliaments of its own, the Engliſh parliament exerciſed over thoſe aſſemblies a permanent authority, and claimed the privilege of making ſtatutes for Ireland. Inſtances, indeed, in early times, of Engliſh ſtatutes being extended expreſsly to Ireland, are not very frequent; but a few ſuch inſtances occur upon record; and from the year 1641, their number was much encreaſed. By long cuſtom, the intention of the charters granted to Ireland, and the form of government in that country, are to be explained, and if we rely upon this moſt infallible interpreter of the meaning of parties, we muſt conclude that the Iriſh legiſlature was, from the beginning, ſubordinate to that of England.

The friends of Iriſh independence argued very differently, and with more ſolidity. The right of conqueſt, they conſidered as a right, which has no exiſtence, it being impoſſible that ſuperior force can ever of itſelf beſtow any right. On the contrary, the employment of force, unleſs in ſupport of a previous right, is an injury, which becomes

becomes the proper object of puniſhment. If Henry II. had no previous right to invade Ireland, and to ſettle in that iſland, he certainly could acquire none by attacking the inhabitants, and ſtripping them of their property, but rather merited puniſhment for the crimes, which he committed againſt them. It is unneceſſary to mention that even this right of conqueſt, ſuppoſing it well founded, would not be applicable to a great part of the inhabitants of Ireland, thoſe, at leaſt, who obtained the greateſt wealth, and had the principle ſhare in the legiſlature; for they, inſtead of being the conquered people, were his Engliſh ſubjects, who had aſſiſted in the conqueſt, and derived the chief benefit from it.

The nature of the Iriſh conſtitution, therefore, is to be inferred, not from the force uſed by England, but from the acquieſcence of the people after this force was withdrawn, and when they could be ſuppoſed to have a free choice. At what period the people came to be in thoſe circumſtances, it is not very eaſy to determine. There are

here

here two particulars, which may ſeem worthy of notice.

Firſt, with reſpect to the form of government, to which, from long cuſtom, the nation is underſtood to have conſented, this muſt be determined from the general uſage, not from a few ſingular exertions made upon extraordinary emergencies. In every rude nation, perſons inveſted with authority, are apt to lay hold of opportunities of indulging themſelves in arbitrary proceedings; and theſe irregular acts frequently paſs without animadverſion or puniſhment. But, from ſuch abuſes, we muſt not reaſon concerning what, in the common apprehenſions of the people, is legal and conſtitutional. What is merely overlooked, or is found too troubleſome to redreſs, we muſt not ſuppoſe to be approved. Thus, while the parliament of Ireland was acknowledged to poſſeſs a legiſlative power, and was applied to by the crown in every branch of legiſlation concerning that country, it is of little moment, that, in ſome few caſes, we alſo meet with regulations extending to Ireland,

Ireland, enacted by the Engliſh parliament, The independence of the Iriſh legiſlature, is to be inferred from the general tenor of proceedings; and it would be abſurd to draw an oppoſite concluſion from a few inſtances of uſurpation or inadvertency.

In the ſecond place, it is to be obſerved, that the effect of old uſage muſt be limited by conſiderations of public utility, and that the moſt univerſal ſubmiſſion of a people, however long continued, will not give ſanction to meaſures incompatible with the great intereſts of ſociety. Had the Iriſh parliament, by general practice, been rendered entirely ſubordinate to that of England, the pernicious tendency of ſuch a conſtitution, with reſpect to Ireland, muſt appear of ſuch magnitude, as to ſhock our feelings of juſtice, and, at any diſtance of time, to juſtify the inhabitants in aſſerting their natural rights.

But this point was not to be determined by abſtract reaſonings, or by general conſiderations on the principles of juſtice. The intereſt of the more powerful country, as commonly happens, was held a ſufficient reaſon for aſſerting and extending its authority over

over the weaker, and the ſyſtem of regulating the trade of Ireland, in ſubſerviency to the views of the mercantile people in England, rendered that intereſt more obvious and conſpicuous. To accompliſh this purpoſe, it was requiſite that England ſhould poſſeſs a power of controuling the Iriſh courts of juſtice. Without this ſhe might command, but had no power to execute; her acts of legiſlation could be made effectual only by her indirect influence over the Iriſh judges.

In the year 1719, a private law-ſuit in Ireland*, gave riſe to a controverſy whether there lay an appeal from the Iriſh tribunals to the houſe of lords in Britain? and this was followed by an act of the Britiſh parliament; calculated for the expreſs purpoſe of ſecuring the dependency of Ireland, upon the crown of Great Britain; and declaring firſt, "that the King's majeſty, by and with "the conſent of the lords, ſpiritual and tem-"poral, and the commons of Great Britain, "in parliament aſſembled, had, hath, and of

* Between Sherlock and Anneſly.

"right

" right ought to have full power and autho-
" rity to make ſtatutes, of ſufficient force,
" and validity, to bind the people and king-
" dom of Ireland."

Secondly, " that the houſe of lords of
" Ireland, have not, nor of right ought to
" have, any juriſdiction to judge of, affirm
" or reverſe, any judgment, ſentence, or
" decree, given or made in any court within
" the ſaid kingdom*."

While Britain was thus eager to oppreſs her ſiſter kingdom, ſhe could not with-hold from this, and from other parts of her empire, that free ſpirit, which the example of her own conſtitution, and the general advancement of commerce and manufactures contributed to inſpire. The leading men of Ireland ſaw, with indignation, this narrow-minded policy, and the invidious marks of bondage with which their country was branded. They complained with bitterneſs of the hard regulations, by which the Iriſh nation, while they profuſely ſhed their blood in the quarrels of Great Britain, were

* 6 Geo. I. chap. 5.

not

not only excluded from the commerce of the Britiſh colonies, but even denied the privilege of trading with foreign nations. They remonſtrated with warmth againſt the injuſtice, by which they had been deprived of their national rights, in order to rob them of the fruits of their induſtry, and by which poverty was entailed upon them as an appendage of that ſlavery, which they were made to inherit.

In one particular the legiſlature of Ireland had preſerved its independence, the article of taxation. It does not appear that the Britiſh parliament ever claimed the privilege of impoſing taxes upon that country; and as ſoon as the Iriſh began to enjoy the advantages of peace, we find their parliaments diſcovering a jealouſy of this branch of authority, and maintaining it with proper ſpirit. In the year 1690, the commons of Ireland rejected a money bill, becauſe it had not taken its riſe in their houſe. In 1709, a money bill was returned from England *with alterations;* upon which account it was rejected by the commons. Another inſtance of

of a ſimilar exertion occurs in the year 1768.

The exertions of the Iriſh nation, in favour of liberty and independence, were frequently counteracted and fruſtrated by the indirect influence of the crown; and nothing contributed more to this abuſe, than the duration of their parliament.

According to the early conſtitution of thoſe aſſemblies, both in England, and in Ireland, they might be diſſolved at the pleaſure of the king; but independent of a diſſolution by this authority, they remained during the king's life. The firſt alteration, in this reſpect, was made in England, in the reign of King William III. when, from the nation having become jealous of the crown-influence over parliaments, their duration was limited to three years; a period, which, in the reign of George I. was extended to ſeven. But no ſuch limitation had been introduced in Ireland, and parliaments, according to the ancient plan, continued to endure for the king's life. In the year 1768, the voice of the nation demanding a reform, in this particular, became irreſiſtible;

and

and a bill for limiting the duration of parliament to eight years, paſſed the two houſes, and obtained the royal aſſent. The *octennial* parliaments of Ireland, in place of the *ſeptennial* parliaments of England, were preferred at the ſuggeſtion of the Engliſh miniſtry, and were probably recommended to them from the view of preventing the inconvenience to government of attending, at the ſame time, to the new elections of both countries. This reform was the forerunner of others, yet more deciſive, in the cauſe of liberty. The members of the houſe of commons became now, in ſome meaſure, dependent upon their conſtituents; and their determinations were, of courſe, more affected by the general feelings of the people.

Britain was involved in great difficulties, and reduced to the utmoſt perplexity, by the war with her North American colonies; in the proſecution of which Ireland had cheerfully contributed her aſſiſtance. Towards the end of that unſucceſsful ſtruggle, the interpoſition of France had expoſed the Britiſh empire, at home, to the danger of inſult and invaſion; and afforded to the

Iriſh

Iriſh a plauſible pretence for undertaking the defence of their own country. Volunteers, therefore, in the different parts of the kingdom were aſſociated and embodied for this purpoſe; and to this exertion, apparently ſo generous and public ſpirited, the countenance and approbation of government could not well be refuſed. In a ſhort time, their number became ſo great, they acquired ſo much the confidence of the people, and were animated by ſuch reſolution, that they could be neither ſuppreſſed nor controuled. Some attempts were made by government to obtain an authority over them, but theſe were eaſily diſcovered and evaded. Thus, while Britain was exhauſted by a ruinous war, Ireland had procured an armed force, which nothing could reſiſt, commanded by her own citizens, and firmly determined to procure the redreſs of her grievances. The conſequences were ſuch as might be expected. In 1778, a bill had been brought into the Britiſh parliament for the removal of all thoſe reſtraints, which had been impoſed upon the trade of Ireland, but the alarm excited in the trading, and

manufacturing

manufacturing towns of Britain rendered the meaſure unſucceſsful. The Iriſh, however, conſcious of their internal ſtrength, were not diſheartened. In their addreſs to the throne, they declared, "it is not by "temporary expedients, but by a free trade "only, that the nation is to be ſaved from "impending ruin." To guard againſt a prorogation before they ſhould obtain redreſs, they refuſed to grant the ſupply for the uſual term of two years, but paſſed a ſhort money bill, to which the royal aſſent was obtained. In the Engliſh houſe of commons, the miniſter, preſſed by the difficulties attending his preſent critical ſituation, propoſed to repeal the reſtrictive ſtatutes complained of, and to grant the Iriſh a free trade to the Britiſh colonies, as well as to foreign countries. The propoſitions which he brought into parliament for that purpoſe were very readily adopted, and obtained the ſanction of the legiſlature.

The joy of the whole people of Ireland, excited by this deciſive and important victory, may eaſily be conceived. It did

not, however, prevent them from following the tide of their ſucceſs, and bearing down every remaining obſtacle to their complete independence. They had ſtill the mortifying reflection that they owed this relief to the favour of an Engliſh miniſtry; that it had been procured by the neceſſity of the times; and that, afterwards, from an alteration of circumſtances, it might, very probably, be withdrawn. To ſecure the permanent enjoyment of preſent advantages, it was neceſſary they ſhould depend upon themſelves. The volunteers, conſcious of having power in their hands, were not negligent in uſing it to the beſt advantage. By chooſing delegates from different quarters, as a ſort of repreſentatives of the whole body by aſſembling theſe delegates on different occaſions to act in concert with one another, by publiſhing reſolutions and remonſtrances expreſſing their unalterable purpoſe to aſſert their liberties, they ſpread an univerſal panic over Great Britain, and a belief that it would be in vain to oppoſe their demands. In this ſituation a change of the Britiſh miniſtry

miniſtry took place; and the Marquis of Rockingham, who came to the head of adminiſtration, found himſelf at liberty to comply with his own inclination, and that of his party, by removing thoſe oppreſſive regulations, which rendered the Iriſh government ſubordinate to the Britiſh. With this view there paſſed an act of the Britiſh legiſlature, containing a repeal of Poyning's law; and alſo a repeal of the ſtatute, by which the parliament of Great Britain is declared to have a power of making laws to bind the Iriſh nation, and of reviewing the ſentences of the Iriſh tribunals.

At a ſubſequent period, during the adminiſtration of Lord Shelburn, it was ſuggeſted, that the repeal of the obnoxious ſtatutes above-mentioned was inſufficient, and the Britiſh parliament was prevailed upon to renounce the principle upon which they had proceeded, by relinquiſhing, on the part of Great Britain, all ſimilar claims for the future. The former conceſſion was neceſſary for the ſecurity of Ireland; the latter was merely the effect of popular

clamour, which produced a juvenile, though, perhaps, a pardonable degree of triumph and exultation.

By theſe alterations Ireland became an independent kingdom, connected by a federal union with Britain, but poſſeſſing within itſelf a ſupreme legiſlative aſſembly, and ſupreme courts for the diſtribution of juſtice.

CHAP.

CHAPTER. II.

Political Conſequences of the Revolution—Subſequent Changes in the State of the Nation —Influence of the Crown.

THE alterations made in the ſtate of the government by what is called the revolution, in 1688, and by the other public regulations in the reign of William III. were judicious, moderate, and prudent. With a perfect adherence to the ſpirit, and with as little deviation as poſſible from the ancient forms of the conſtitution, they were well calculated to reſtrain the arbitrary conduct of the ſovereign, and appeared to eſtabliſh a limited monarchy upon a ſolid and permanent baſis.

All the avenues and paſſes, through which the prerogative had formerly invaded the rights of the people, were now apparently guarded and ſecured. The king could neither maintain troops, nor obtain the neceſſary ſupplies, without the annual interpoſition of the legiſlature, and therefore was laid under

under the inevitable neceſſity of calling regular and frequent meetings of Parliament. The former diſputes upon that ſubject were conſequently at an end. Any future injunction upon the ſovereign, to perform his duty in this reſpect, was now ſuperſeded. As he could no longer procure money, or carry on the buſineſs of government, without parliamentary aid, it was to be expected that no future complaints of his neglecting to convene that aſſembly would ever be heard. It was no longer prudent for him to hazard the angry diſſolution of a parliament for refuſing to comply with his demands; a meaſure tending to engender enmity and reſentment in that claſs of men, whoſe good will and cordial affection were become indiſpenſibly requiſite. In a word, the executive power was rendered completely ſubordinate to the legiſlative; which is agreeable to the natural order of things; and without which there can be no free government.

The legiſlative power was, by the ancient ſtructure of the conſtitution, lodged in the aſſembly compoſed of king, lords, and commons; ſo that the king, to whom was committed the

the province of executing the laws, had alſo a great ſhare in making them. But this regulation, which is juſtly conſidered by political writers, as inconſiſtent with the perfection of a free government, has been, in a great meaſure, removed by cuſtom. As every bill muſt paſs through the two houſes before it can receive the royal aſſent, and as the king cannot legally interfere in bills depending before either houſe, the interpoſition of his negative would be apt to excite ſuch national clamour as no wiſe prince would chooſe to incur, and would be repugnant to the principles of the conſtitution, by evincing greater confidence in the advice of other perſons than of the national council*. For a long time, therefore, the exerciſe of this branch of power in the crown has been entirely diſuſed, and the legiſlative has been of courſe, placed in different hands from the executive.

Comparing the two houſes of parliament with each other, the commons, conſiſting of

* See the debates upon this ſubject ſoon after the revolution. Hatſell's Proceedings of Parliament.

national

national repreſentatives, ſuſtain the popular part of the legiſlature, while the peers ſuſtain the ariſtocratical. From circumſtances, which I had formerly occaſion to obſerve, the commons acquired the excluſive power of bringing in all money bills, and the peers have only that of aſſenting, or interpoſing their negative to the grant. This part of the conſtitution, which aroſe from the ancient forms of deliberation, is now ſupported by conſiderations of the higheſt expediency. The commons repreſent all the property of the kingdom, that of the peerage alone excepted; and therefore it may be ſuppoſed, that from a regard to their own intereſt, as well as that of the community at large, they will be induced to prevent the impoſition of unreaſonable taxes. The crown, on the other hand, is intereſted to augment the public revenue; and the peers, who are created by the crown, and have an immediate connection with the higher offices and places in its diſpoſal, may be ſuſpected of adhering invariably to its intereſt. The houſe of peers, therefore, in matters of taxation, is allowed to vote in favour of the people,

people, but not in favour of the crown. It cannot grant ſupplies, but may interpoſe a negative upon thoſe which have been ſuggeſted by the commons.

As it had long been a maxim in the Engliſh government, "that the king can do no wrong," by which is meant, that his miniſters are alone reſponſible for ordinary acts of mal-adminiſtration, it was hence inferred, that theſe miniſters muſt be allowed excluſively to direct and govern the ſtate machine; for it would be the height of injuſtice to load them with the crimes of another, nor could it be expected that any man of ſpirit would ſubmit to be a miniſter upon ſuch terms. Were it even poſſible to find perſons willing to anſwer for meaſures which they were not permitted to guide, their nominal adminiſtration would not ſerve the purpoſe intended; as the reſponſibility of ſuch mean and ſervile officers could afford no ſecurity to the public, that the abuſes of the executive power might be reſtrained by the terrors of ſuch vicarious puniſhment.

Thus, by the principles of the conſtitution, the real exerciſe of the executive or miniſterial

miniſterial power came to be regularly, though tacitly, committed to a ſet of miniſters, appointed by the king during pleaſure. Their number, though not accurately fixed, was in ſome meaſure circumſcribed by that of the chief official ſituations in the gift of the crown; and the individuals belonging to this body were ſtill more diſtinctly pointed out, and recognized by the public, from their compoſing a ſelect, or cabinet council, by whoſe concurrence and direction the adminiſtration was viſibly conducted.

Theſe miniſters being nominated or diſplaced at the diſcretion of the crown, their continuance in office was, of courſe, brought under the controul of the two houſes of parliament, and more eſpecially under that of the commons, upon whom, by their power of granting or withholding ſupplies, the movements of government ultimately depended. From the nature of the conſtitution, tending to attract the attention of the public to the conduct of its managers, and from circumſtances attending the direction of all political meaſures, it was to be expected that this controul of the legiſlature over the appointment

pointment of the principal officers of ſtate would be frequently exerciſed. From the event of a war, not correſponding to the ſanguine expectations of the people; from the ſoliciting and enforcing new taxes, which are uſually paid with reluctance, and productive of bad humour; from the unfortunate iſſue of hazardous tranſactions, not to mention the errors and blunders which are unavoidable in difficult emergencies, or even the corrupt deſigns that may be diſcovered or ſuſpected, every junto of miniſters is likely in a courſe of time, to become, in its turn, unpopular, and even to excite the public indignation and reſentment. From the multitude of expectants, compared with thoſe who can poſſibly enjoy places under government, the number of perſons who think themſelves not rewarded in proportion to their merits, is apt, at the ſame time, to be continually encreaſing, and to ſupply the party in oppoſition with new reinforcements. Thus, in the natural progreſs of things, it might be expected that the growing clamour and diſcontent againſt every miniſtry which had long remained in power would be ſuch

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as to clog and obſtruct their meaſures, to entangle them in difficulties more and more inextricable, and at length to produce a parliamentary application for their removal.

By the operation of theſe combined circumſtances the Engliſh government ſeemed, in the executive branch, to poſſeſs the anvantages both of a monarchy and a republic, by uniting the dignity and authority of a heriditary monarch, calculated to repreſs inſurrection and diſorder, with the joint deliberation of ſeveral chief executive officers, and a frequent rotation of their offices, tending to guard againſt the tyranny of a ſingle perſon.

In the judicial department, it was the object to give deciſions, partly according to the rules of law founded upon long experience and obſervation, partly upon the feelings of equity and the principles of common ſenſe. In the former view profeſſional judges were appointed by the crown: in the latter, jury-men were ſelected from among the people. To ſecure, as far as poſſible, the independence of judges, they were, for the moſt part, appointed for life. To hinder

der jurymen from acquiring the habits of profeſſional judges, they were choſen for each particular cauſe. So far as the king had retained the direction of public proſecutions for crimes, various regulations were made to prevent the abuſes of this power by arbitrary impriſonment, or other acts of oppreſſion*.

Such were the outlines of that conſtitution which, through many accidental changes, and by a courſe of gradual improvements upon the primitive ſyſtem of the European nations, was finally eſtabliſhed in the reign of William III. a mixed form of government, but remarkable for its beautiful ſimplicity, and in which the powers committed to different orders of men were ſo modelled and adjuſted as to become ſubſervient to one great purpoſe, the preſervation of the rights and liberties of the people.

* The moſt remarkable of thoſe regulations, which is called the *habeas corpus*, by which any perſon impriſoned on pretence of a crime, may require that his trial ſhould be commenced and finiſhed within a certain time, originated in the *great charters*, and was rendered more ſpecific in the reigns of Charles I. and Charles II.

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We are not, however, to dream of perfection in any human workmanſhip. Faleſs are we to imagine that a governmen can be ſo contrived as, for ages, to remain equally ſuited to a nation whoſe condition and circumſtances are perpetually changing. As the huſbandman varies his mode of culture and management, according to the meliorations of the ſoil, and to the alterations in the ſtate of his farm, or of the markets, the legiſlator muſt accommodate his regulations to the progreſſive changes in the condition of the people for whom they are intended, to their progreſs in manufactures and commerce, their increaſe in opulence, and their advances in luxury or in refinement.

In England there were two great changes in the ſtate of ſociety, the remarkable appearance of which may be dated from the revolution, though their commencement was doubtleſs earlier, and the rapid progreſs of which may be traced through the whole of the following century. The firſt is the growing influence of the crown, ariſing from the patronage which it has acquired, and the

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correſpondent habits of dependence in the people which have thence been produced.

After the government had been ſettled by the regulations which took place at the revolution, and in the reign of William III. parliament no longer entertained any jealouſy of encroachments from the prerogative, and became willing to grant ſupplies with a liberality of which there was formerly no example. The extenſive enterpriſes in which the crown was engaged, and in which the intereſt of the nation was deeply involved; the ſettlement of Britain, the reduction of Ireland, the proſecution of the war with France, were productive of great expence, which the public could not view in any other light than as the price of their liberties, and therefore could not decently, or with any colour of juſtice, refuſe to defray. In a ſubſequent period, new ſituations, though leſs urgent, afforded a plauſible pretence for new demands; which, from various reaſons, whether of a public or private nature were frequently complied with. England becoming gradually more opulent and powerful, was led, from vanity or ambition,

bition, to take a greater ſhare in the diſputes of her neighbours, and to aſſume a higher rank in the ſcale of nations. Her civil and military eſtabliſhments became gradually more extenſive; the management and protection of her increaſing wealth required a greater variety of regulations; and the number of her officers and magiſtrates, in all the departments of adminiſtration, was, of courſe, augmented. An augmentation of the public revenue, to ſupply the growing wants of the ſtate, was thus rendered indiſpenſible.

In a courſe of time theſe public burdens became familiar and habitual, both to parliament and to the nation, and the impoſition of new taxes, which, in the beginning had often excited alarm and clamour, was at length reduced to an ordinary tranſaction, requiring little examination or attention, and of which the refuſal would betray uncommon ſuſpicion and diſcontent. It happened in this as it uſually happens in caſes of private liberality. A donation which has been frequently and regularly beſtowed comes, after a length of time, to be regarded as a kind of debt; an[illegible]hold it is looked upon as a

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ſpecies of injury. When parliament had been accuſtomed to confide in the reports of miniſtry, and, without much enquiry to acquieſce in their demands, its future confidence and acquieſcence were expected; and the money came to be ſometimes granted even in caſes where the meaſures of adminiſtration, which had occaſioned the expence, were condemned and ſeverely cenſured.

But notwithſtanding the readineſs of parliament to ſtretch every nerve in ſupplying the demands of the executive government, the neceſſities of adminiſtration ſurpaſſed, occaſionally, what the circumſtances of the nation were thought able to afford. Having incurred an expence beyond what the taxes which could be levied within the year were ſufficient to repay, miniſtry endeavoured to relieve themſelves by ſuch an expedient, as in a ſimilar caſe, has commonly been ſuggeſted to individuals. They anticipated the national income, by borrowing the money required, and aſſigning a particular branch of revenue for the ſecurity of the creditor. The funds appropriated to this purpoſe were not, at firſt, intended to remain under per-

petual mortgage; being ſufficient, not only to diſcharge the yearly intereſt of the debt, but even to clear the incumbrance in a few years. Succeſſive experiments, however, encouraged miniſters to venture upon ſtill more expenſive undertakings; the quantity of money in circulation, a conſequence of the flouriſhing ſtate of commerce, enabled them eaſily to find the ſums that were wanted; and by giving to the creditor a high rate of intereſt, transferrable at pleaſure, with other pecuniary emoluments, they had no difficulty in perſuading him entirely to ſink his capital. In this manner they introduced, what is called, a *debt in perpetuity*, the amount of which, for obvious reaſons, has been continually and rapidly encreaſing. By this expedient, a miniſter, whoſe intereſt may lead him to ſpend the whole public income in time of peace, is enabled to draw upon futurity for the additional expence of maintaining a war; and as in countries advancing rapidly in luxury, diſſipation, and extravagance, every ſucceeding war is likely to be more expenſive than the former, his

draughts can hardly fail to advance in the ſame proportion.

The public revenue has thus come to be divided into two great branches; that which is intended to defray the annual expence of government, and that which is levied to diſcharge the annual intereſt of the national debt. The former is plainly the ſource of influence in the crown, in proportion to the patronage reſulting from the diſpoſal of the money. All who enjoy, or who expect offices, or places of emolument, in the gift of the crown, and even in ſome degree their kindred and connections, may be expected to court, and to ſupport that intereſt upon which they depend; to acquire ſuitable habits, opinions, and prejudices, and in ſuch diſputes or differences as occur between prerogative and privilege, to arrange themſelves under the miniſterial ſtandard.

In the ſame claſs with the patronage derived from this ordinary revenue, we may conſider that which ariſes from various other offices, or places of honour and profit, in the gift, or under the controul and direction of adminiſtration, though ſupported

by different funds; ſuch as thoſe proceeding from the government of Ireland, or of the Britiſh colonies; the higher dignities in the church; the lucrative places in the ſervice of the Eaſt India company, and many eſtabliſhments for education and for charitable purpoſes. The extent of this patronage cannot eaſily be calculated; though it is apparently immenſe, and has been advancing in a highly accelerated *ratio*, from the revolution to the preſent time.

The other great branch of the public revenue, what is levied to pay the intereſt of the national debt, ought to be examined in connection with the money borrowed, by which that debt was contracted.

The money borrowed for the ſupport of a war is the ſource of influence to the crown in two different ways. Firſt, by its immediate expenditure, which occaſions an immenſe patronage, from the ſudden increaſe of the army and navy, the employment of numerous contractors and other civil officers, the appendages of war, and the various tranſactions which that active and violent ſtate of the country may produce.

duce. Secondly, from the advantages accruing to thoſe rich individuals, who lend the money to government, and who, by availing themſelves of the preſſing demands of the public, are enabled to reap more profit from the loan, than could be drawn from any other branch of trade.

In this ſituation the gain of the money-lenders, and of all who are employed in the ſervice of the ſtate, is evidently ſo much the greater, as the money is commonly ſpent, and the tranſactions of government are made, upon the ſpur of the occaſion, amid the hurry and agitation of ſtrong paſſions, without leiſure to deliberate, and without opportunities of practiſing the ordinary rules of prudence and economy. In ſuch caſes, there is unavoidably a negligent waſte, a precipitate raſhneſs, in the public expenditure, from which thoſe vermin, who feed upon the neceſſities of their country, enjoy a plentiful repaſt.

Thus a war, though generally hurtful to the community at large, proves often highly beneficial to a portion of its members; to the landed gentlemen, who, by ſerving in the

the army and navy, obtain a proviſion for themſelves and their families; and thoſe of the mercantile intereſt, who, by the extenſive loans to government, and by lucrative employments, obtain the means of accumulating princely fortunes. From theſe private conſiderations it happens, that ſo much blood and treaſure is frequently conſumed in wars, undertaken from trivial cauſes; and continued without any rational proſpect of public advantage.

To be ſenſible of the extent of this evil we need only conſider, that, of the period which has elapſed from the revolution to the preſent time, between a third and one-half has been employed in wars, proſecuted in this expenſive and improvident manner, and producing an inceſſant and regularly accelerated accumulation of public debt, which now amounts to more than five hundred millions*. It cannot eſcape obſervation, that the uncommon influence acquired by the crown, while the nation is in a ſtate of warfare, will not be immediately extin-

* See reſolution of the Houſe of Commons, 5th Jan. and 1ſt Feb. 1801.

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guiſhed upon the concluſion of a peace, but, from the uſual effects of habit, by remembrance of the paſt, and by anticipation of future emoluments, may in ſome meaſure be retained and propagated from one military harveſt to another.

With reſpect to the permanent funds created for paying the intereſt of the national debt, theſe give riſe to a ſeparate influence of the crown; *firſt*, by inducing the holders of ſtock to promote the popularity of miniſters, and to ſupport their meaſures, in order to raiſe the value of thoſe funds; *ſecondly*, by the number of public officers, in the nomination of the king, who are employed in collecting or managing this branch of the revenue.

Upon the whole, the ordinary public revenue directly at the diſpoſal of the crown, or indirectly contributing to its influence, which, immediately before the revolution, amounted to about two millions yearly, has, by the gradual expanſion of the two great branches already mentioned, riſen to the prodigious annual ſum of above thirty millions; and thus without including the value

value of thoſe numerous offices and places, in the gift of the crown, which are ſupported by other funds than the national taxes.

That the ſecret influence of the crown has been continually encreaſing from this change of circumſtances will hardly be doubted. But has it encreaſed in proportion to the riſe of the public revenue, and to the encreaſe in the value of all the offices and emoluments at the diſpoſal of adminiſtration? This appears to merit a particular examination.

To have a full view of this queſtion, it is proper to obſerve, that the augmentation of the public revenue, ſince the acceſſion of William III. has proceeded from three different cauſes.

1. It has proceeded, in part, from the encreaſing wealth of the nation. The defence of property is one of the great purpoſes of government; and according as more wealth has been accumulated by any people, its protection and ſecurity will coſt more trouble; and, by giving riſe to a more intricate ſyſtem of regulations, will require

require the employment of a greater number of perſons in the ſervice of adminiſtration. The encreaſe of riches in a country has, at the ſame time, a tendency to raiſe the price of commodities, as well as, from faſhion, to introduce more expenſive modes of living; and this makes it neceſſary that the different ſervants of government, to preſerve the ſame rank as formerly, ſhould obtain a ſuitable advancement of emoluments. An encreaſe of taxes, in ſome ſhape or other, is thus rendered indiſpenſible.

So far as an augmentation of the revenue has ariſen from the greater difficulty in the protection of property, producing a more intricate ſyſtem of management, it muſt undoubtedly have encreaſed the influence of the crown; but ſo far as this augmentation has proceeded from a riſe in the expence of living, there ſeems no ground for aſcribing to it any ſuch tendency. Suppoſing the expence of living to be trebled or quadrupled ſince the revolution, and that upon this account, the public revenue has been encreaſed in the ſame proportion; this encreaſe will neither enable miniſters to hire

hire more ſervants, nor to reward them better; nor if it were employed even in the direct operation of bribery, would it produce a greater effect.

2. The augmentation of the public revenue has likewiſe been partly derived from an enlargement of the empire, and from a multiplication of the inhabitants. The greater the number of people included in one ſyſtem of government, the management of their public concerns will be rendered the more complex, and of conſequence more expenſive. That this circumſtance has contributed greatly to extend the influence of the ſovereign is unqueſtionable.

The larger and more populous any empire becomes, that is, the greater the number of individuals paying taxes, the influence of the king, who has the diſpoſal of the revenue, will, other circumſtances being equal, become ſo much the greater; becauſe that revenue acquires a greater ſuperiority over the wealth of any one of his ſubjects, and overbalances more deciſively that of any junto of the people, who could poſſibly aſſociate for oppoſing and controuling

controuling his authority. Suppoſe, for example, a nation compoſed of no more than 100,000 men, paying taxes at the rate of forty ſhillings each perſon. The revenue, which would thence ariſe, of 200,000l. a year, would probably not render the Sovereign much richer than a few of his moſt opulent ſubjects, and conſequently, after deducting the ſum requiſite for maintaining his family, would be totally inadequate to the ſupport of his rank.

If the ſtate were ſo enlarged as that the people, paying taxes at the ſame rate, amounted to a million, it is evident, that by the revenue of two millions yearly, which would thus be levied, the king would be exalted in a much greater proportion, and would have little reaſon to fear that his influence might be counterbalanced by any caſual accumulation of property in the hands of his refractory ſubjects. By ſuppoſing a ſtate to comprehend twenty or thirty millions, we may conceive that the revenue, according to the ſame rate of taxation, would bear down all oppoſition, and become perfectly irreſiſtible.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, the increaſe of the public revenue, during the period under conſideration, may, perhaps chiefly, be imputed to the negligence and miſmanagement incident to all extenſive undertakings. Whoever conſiders the waſte and bad economy which commonly take place in managing the private eſtate of a rich individual; the idleneſs and embezzlement of ſervants; the inattention, the fraudulent and colluſive practices of ſtewards and overſeers, may eaſily conceive the ſtill greater abuſes that are likely to occur in managing the concerns of a great empire. As there a ſtrict overſight is impoſſible, all the ſervants in the various departments of government are left in ſome meaſure to their own diſcretion, and are at liberty to practice innumerable expedients for promoting their own intereſt. They will endeavour, therefore, we may ſuppoſe, to improve their ſituation in two different ways: firſt, by laying hold of every pretence, and employing every method to encreaſe their perquiſites and emoluments: ſecondly, by doing as little as they poſſibly can, without incurring

curring either puniſhment or cenſure; ſo that, in order to ſupply their deficiencies, a variety of aſſiſtants and inſpectors muſt be appointed. The expence of adminiſtration is thus unneceſſarily augmented, both by a needleſs multiplication of the officers in the ſervice of government, and by beſtowing upon them a greater income than the performance of their duty gives them any right to demand. To what a monſtrous height has this abuſe, which has continued for more than a century, been at length carried! How many officers, in church and ſtate, obtain immenſe fortunes from the public for doing no work, or next to none! How many are often employed to perform the duty which might eaſily be performed by a ſingle perſon! The tendency of this to encreaſe the patronage, and conſequently the influence of the crown, is too obvious to require illuſtration.

It ſhould ſeem, therefore, that the augmentation of the public revenue, ſo far as it has proceeded from any other circumſtance, except an augmentation in the general

neral expence of living, has been attended with a proportional encreaſe in the patronage and influence of the crown, and has contributed to ſtrengthen the monarchical part of the conſtitution.

We may further remark, that the influence, ariſing from the cauſes already ſpecified, is apt to be the greater, as it operates upon the manners and habits of a mercantile people: a people engroſſed by lucrative trades; and profeſſions, whoſe great object is gain, and whoſe ruling principle is avarice: a people whoſe diſtinguiſhing feature, as a great author obſerves, is juſtice; equally oppoſed to diſhoneſty on the one hand, and to generoſity on the other; not that nice and delicate juſtice, the offſpring of refined humanity, but that coarſe, though uſeful virtue, the guardian of contracts and promiſes, whoſe guide is the ſquare and the compaſs, and whoſe protector is the gallows. By a people of this deſcription, no opportunity of earning a penny is to be loſt; and whatever holds out a view of intereſt, without violating any municipal

municipal law, or incurring any hazard, is to be warmly embraced. *Quærenda pecunia primum.*

From the time of the revolution, accordingly, we may trace, in ſome meaſure, a new order of things; a new principle of authority, which is worthy the attention of all who ſpeculate upon political ſubjects. Before that period, the friends of liberty dreaded only the direct encroachments of the prerogative: they have ſince learnt to entertain ſtronger apprehenſions of the ſecret motives of intereſt which the crown may hold up to individuals, and by which it may ſeduce them from the duty which they owe to the public. To what a height, in fact, has this influence been raiſed in all the departments of government, and how extenſively has it pervaded all ranks and deſcriptions of the inhabitants. In the army, in the church, at the bar, in the republic of letters, in finance, in mercantile and manufacturing corporations. Not to mention penſioners and placemen; together with the various officers connected with the diſtribution of juſtice, and the execution of the

popularity, and that ruinous meaſures ſeem to be ſanctioned by the opinion of the nation.

The progreſſive advancement of influence in the crown, has gradually been productive of changes in the methods of conducting the buſineſs of the legiſlature. It was early an eſſential maxim in the Engliſh government, as I formerly obſerved, that every propoſal for a new ſtatute ſhould originate in either houſe of parliament; and that, it could not come under the conſideration of the king, until it had paſſed through the two houſes. The crown, therefore, had merely a negative upon the reſolutions of parliament, a power of preventing the ſtate veſſel from wandering into a new tract, not that of putting it in motion, or of directing its courſe. From the circumſtances which have been mentioned, this order of proceeding is, in a good meaſure, inverted. Though the king had no right to interfere in the deliberations of parliament; yet his miniſters, as members of either houſe, might ſuggeſt any bill to its conſideration; and, from the ſecret influence of the crown,

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the bills introduced in this manner were likely to obtain a favourable hearing, and to be moſt ſucceſsful. At preſent almoſt all bills of importance are thus indirectly brought into parliament by the crown, and in all ordinary caſes, are ſupported and paſſed by a great majority. Thus while the king no longer exerciſes his original prerogative of with-holding the royal aſſent from the determinations of parliament, he has in reality acquired the more important power of propoſing the laws, and the privilege of debate which remains in the two houſes, is reduced to a mere paſſive power of controul; that is, to be little more than a negative; a negative too, which, in the ordinary ſtate of political controverſy, can rarely be exerciſed.

Has there occurred nothing on the other ſide to counterbalance the effect of this growing patronage, and its correſpondent influence? Have the progreſſive changes in the ſtate of ſociety, ſince the time of the revolution-ſettlement, contributed uniformly to ſupport the authority of the monarch,

and can we diſcover no circumſtances of an oppoſite nature tending to preſerve the former equilibrium, by ſupporting the popular part of our conſtitution? The rapid improvements of arts and manufactures, and the correſpondent extenſion of commerce, which followed the clear and accurate limitation of the prerogative, produced a degree of wealth and affluence, which diffuſed a feeling of independence and a high ſpirit of liberty, through the great body of the people; while the advancement of ſcience and literature diſſipated the narrow political prejudices which had prevailed, and introduced ſuch principles as were more favourable to the equal rights of mankind. This is the other great change in the ſtate of ſociety, to which I alluded in the beginning of this chapter, and of which I ſhall now proceed to give an account.

In a review of the different reigns, from that of William III. to the preſent time, I ſhall afterwards endeavour to trace the ſtruggles between thoſe two oppoſite principles, of regal influence and popular independence,

pendence, and to point out the chief incidents of a conſtitutional hiſtory, lying in a good meaſure beneath that common ſurface of events which occupies the details of the vulgar hiſtorian.

CHAPTER III.

The Advancement of Manufactures, Commerce, and the Arts, ſince the Reign of William III.; and the Tendency of this Advancement to diffuſe a Spirit of Liberty and Independence.

THE natural advantages of England, in the cultivation of wool, having promoted her woollen manufacture, it was to be expected that her induſtry, and her capitals, derived from that ſource, would be communicated to other branches of labour, in which they might be employed with ſimilar ſucceſs. Her maritime ſituation, by extending the benefit of water-carriage over a great part of the iſland, and by rendering many of the inhabitants acquainted with navigation, was calculated to produce a ſuitable extenſion of commerce, and to open a foreign market for ſuch of her commodities as exceeded her internal conſumption. The full eſtabliſhment of a regular and free conſtitution was alone wanting to improve theſe favourable

circumſtances, by exciting that energy and vigour which political liberty, and the ſecure poſſeſſion and enjoyment of property are wont to inſpire. This was obtained by the memorable Revolution in 1688, which completed, and reduced into practice, a government of a more popular nature, and better fitted to ſecure the natural rights of mankind, than had ever taken place in a great nation. From this happy period, therefore, commerce and manufactures aſſumed a new aſpect, and, continuing to advance with rapidity, produced innumerable changes in the ſtate of ſociety, and in the character and manners of the people.

It would be ſuperfluous to obſerve, that theſe improvements have been attended with correſpondent advances in agriculture, and in the arts connected with it. Commerce and manufactures, by encreaſing wealth and population, muſt enhance the demand for proviſions; and conſequently, by augmenting the profits of the farmer, cannot fail to ſtimulate his induſtry and activity. It will be found, accordingly, from the general hiſtory of the world, that, in all countries where

where there is no trade, the cultivation of the ground, if at all known, is performed in a rude and ſlovenly manner; and that a conſiderable progreſs of mercantile improvements has generally preceded an equal degree of ſkill and dexterity in the ſeveral branches of huſbandry. The cultivation of the ground, as Dr. Smith juſtly obſerves, can never, in any country, approach to perfection, until the price of butcher-meat has, from the diffuſion of wealth, riſen to ſuch a pitch as will induce the farmer to employ his beſt grounds, at leaſt occaſionally, in the paſturing of cattle; by which he may obtain a conſtant ſupply of manure, ſufficient to repair that part of his land which has been exhauſted by tillage. As England has been long in that ſituation, her beſt land is frequently retained for the ſole purpoſe of feeding cattle, or in what is called *meadow*; while in Scotland, whoſe mercantile and agricultural improvements have been much later, there is no ſuch general practice; and the appellation of *meadow*, is only given to thoſe marſhy grounds,

grounds, which, for want of draining, are unfit for the plough.

The ſame circumſtances, which thus promoted the internal trade of England, were no leſs favourable to her commercial intercourſe with other nations. The encouragement of her foreign trade became a great object as far back as the reign of James I. and of Elizabeth; when trading companies were erected by public authority, and colonies, under the protection of government, were formed in diſtant parts of the globe. Thoſe great companies were, at the ſame time, inveſted with excluſive privileges, calculated to ſecure them in the monopoly of the ſeveral branches of trade for which they had been incorporated. In the infancy of commerce, ſuch regulations were, perhaps, requiſite for the encouragement of new and hazardous undertakings; and their apparent equity, inaſmuch as they beſtowed upon the adventurers the fruit of their own ſpirited activity, could hardly be diſputed. But in a ſubſequent period, when the progreſs of commercial improvements had produced large capitals,

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and a numerous body of merchants, ready to engage in every enterprise which promised an adequate, though, perhaps, a distant return of profit, it began to be perceived that these monopolies were, in every view, inconvenient and pernicious. They contributed to check any competition among the workmen engaged in producing those commodities, which were the subject of the monopoly trade; and, consequently, tended to diminish the *quantity*, as well as to degrade the *quality*, of those commodities. They also prevented all competition in the sale of such commodities, and enabled the monopolists, by starving the market, to advance their price in proportion. Thus the community at large became a sufferer in two respects; first, by procuring goods of an inferior quality to what might otherwise have been expected; secondly, by being obliged to purchase them above their natural rate. Since the Revolution, therefore, these exclusive trading companies have been gradually abolished; and their trade laid open to the whole nation. The monopoly of the East India company has alone been

been excepted, and continues to be enforced with the utmoſt rigour. Some authors have endeavoured, from the diſtance of the country, and from the extent and other peculiarities of the Indian trade, to juſtify this exception; but, after all, there is little room to doubt, that it has proceeded from political, more than from commercial conſiderations, and that the ſtrength, not the weakneſs of this company, is the real ground of the ſupport which it has of late received from government.

The ſyſtem of impoſing reſtrictions upon commerce has not been directed ſolely to the purpoſe of encouraging particular trading companies. Politicians have conceived that individuals, in proſecuting ſchemes of private intereſt, were it not for the watchful inſpection and controul of government, might be tempted to employ their labour, and their capitals, upon ſuch branches of trade as are leſs beneficial to the public than others; and that they ought to be reſtrained and diverted from ſo doing by numerous regulations; by taxes, prohibitions, and bounties. In particular, the view

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of preſerving a balance of our trade with foreign nations, ought to drive us out of every market in which our imports exceed our exports. Our trade with every foreign country was regarded as profitable, if we ſent to it more goods than we received, and, conſequently, obtained a ſurplus in money. If the contrary, it was conſidered as unprofitable and hurtful. This maxim which runs through the older writers on trade, appears now to be almoſt univerſally exploded. When we give to our neighbours money for uſeful and marketable commodities, we obtain a real value, and an adequate mercantile profit, no leſs than when we give commodities for their money. To carry on the trade of our country with advantage, and to ſupply the wants of the inhabitants, it may often be requiſite that we ſhould purchaſe the goods of particular nations, who have not an equal demand for our manufactures; but this will be compenſated by our trade with others, who are in oppoſite circumſtances, and who give to us a ſurplus in money. If our conſumption be not greater than our productions; that

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is, if we are an induſtrious people; the balance of our trade with all the world, taken complexly, whatever may be the caſe with particular nations, can never be againſt us; and, if we have commodities for which there is a general demand, we can ſeldom remain long without an opportunity of turning them into money.

The quantity of the current ſpecies upon the face of the globe is naturally, and without any artificial direction, adjuſted to the extent of the circulation in each particular country; for its occaſional ſcarcity, in any one quarter, would raiſe its value in that place, and make it conſtantly flow thither until the equilibrium ſhould be reſtored.

Upon the whole, there is good reaſon to conclude, that the mercantile people are the beſt judges of their own intereſt; and that, by purſuing thoſe lines of trade which they find moſt beneficial to themſelves, they are likely to produce, in moſt caſes, the greateſt benefit to the public. The adminiſtrators of government can ſeldom, from their own knowledge, be ſufficiently qualified to judge in matters of this kind; and

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they are likely to be directed by perſons who have an intereſt to miſlead them. They have, therefore, frequently contributed more to hurt, than to improve the commercial machine, by their tampering; and their interpoſitions, beſides loading the public with immediate expence, from the bounties beſtowed upon the favourite branches of trade, have diverted the mercantile capitals of the nation into channels, very different from their natural courſe, in which they have been productive of leſs profit, than they would otherwiſe have yielded.

For inculcating this truth, and placing it in a great variety of lights, the world is much indebted to the philoſophers of a neighbouring country; and ſtill more to the ingenious and profound author of "The "Cauſes of the Wealth of Nations;" by whom the ſubject is explained and illuſtrated in a manner that affords the fulleſt conviction. The univerſal approbation which this new doctrine has met with in the higher claſſes of mercantile people, in oppoſition to a rooted prejudice, connected with the

private intereſts of a numerous body of men, is, of itſelf, a deciſive proof of the high advances of commercial improvement, and of the enlarged views of political economy, by which the preſent age has become ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed.

The great extenſion of thoſe means, which have been deviſed to promote and facilitate the circulation of commodities, affords another ſatisfactory illuſtration of the great extent, and the rapid encreaſe, of our commercial dealings.

The introduction of money was a neceſſary contrivance for producing an exchange between perſons, who had no reciprocal demand for the goods of each other. By this expedient, any perſon, provided with a ſufficient quantity of the current ſpecies, was in a condition to purchaſe from every one who had goods to diſpoſe of. But when, in the progreſs of commerce, merchants came to be engaged in a multiplicity of tranſactions, the quantity of money which they were obliged, at all times, to keep in their poſſeſſion, for ſatisfying their occaſional demands, became proportionably

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large; and the retaining ſo much dead ſtock, which yielded no profit, was an inconvenience, from which, we may eaſily ſuppoſe, they endeavoured, by every poſſible means, to relieve themſelves. If they had the reputation of wealth, they might ſometimes perſuade a creditor to accept of their perſonal obligation in place of immediate payment; and their promiſſory note, properly authenticated, might even be regarded as nearly equivalent to ready money, and might therefore paſs from hand to hand in the purchaſe of goods. From an extenſion of this practice proceeded the eſtabliſhment of *banks*, or mercantile companies, poſſeſſed of ſufficient wealth to enſure their good credit, who made it a regular buſineſs, upon receiving an equivalent, to iſſue promiſſory notes payable on demand; and even, upon a ſuitable premium, to advance money upon the perſonal obligation of others. Theſe inſtitutions were introduced into the mercantile countries of Europe, from the interpoſition of public authority, by which the members of each banking company were incorporated, and exempted from being

liable

liable to their creditors beyond the extent of a certain ſpecified capital. Upon this footing, the Bank of England was erected, ſoon after the acceſſion of William III.; and at a ſubſequent period, two ſmaller companies, of a ſimilar nature, were eſtabliſhed in the northern part of the iſland. But the advantages derived from this branch of trade, have ſince produced innumerable private adventurers over the country, who, without any aid from government, and conſequently becoming liable to the amount of their whole fortunes, have engaged in the banking buſineſs, and appear to have puſhed all its branches to their utmoſt extent. By the aſſiſtance of theſe banks, whether public or private, the nation has obtained a variety of reſources for procuring money upon a ſudden demand, and for turning it to an immediate account as ſoon as the demand is over; ſo that the quantity of current ſpecie, which muſt ever lie unemployed in the hands of an individual, has been rendered more and more inſignificant.

The ſame effect has flowed indirectly from the eſtabliſhment of the funds belong-

ing to ſome great mercantile corporations, and of thoſe created by the public for paying the intereſt of the national debt; the nature of which I ſhall have occaſion hereafter to conſider. As every one is permitted to buy or ſell, at his conveniency, greater or ſmaller ſhares in thoſe funds, he has thus the command of money for any lucrative undertaking, and may replace it with profit whenever it ceaſes to be better employed.

In theſe progreſſive improvements of our commercial policy, without entering farther into particulars, we cannot fail to recognize the appearances of a nation which has long enjoyed all the advantages of high proſperity in trade and manufactures; and it remains to enquire, how far the uninterrupted poſſeſſion, and daily encreaſe of theſe bleſſings, have contributed to inſpire the people with higher notions of liberty, and more ardent zeal in defence of their privileges.

The ſpirit of liberty appears, in commercial countries, to depend chiefly upon two circumſtances: firſt, the condition of the people relative to the diſtribution of property,

perty, and the means of ſubſiſtence; ſecondly, the facility with which the ſeveral members of ſociety are enabled to aſſociate and to act in concert with one another.

1. With reſpect to the former circumſtance, the whole property of ſuch a country, and the ſubſiſtence of all the inhabitants, may, according to the phraſeology of late writers upon political economy, be derived from three different ſources; from the rent of land or water; from the profits of ſtock or capital; and from the wages of labour: and, in conformity to this arrangement, the inhabitants may be divided into landlords, capitaliſts, and labourers.

Of labourers, who form the loweſt claſs, the ſituation and way of life muſt, in every country, render them in ſome degree dependent upon the perſon who gives them employment. Having little or no property, and earning a bare ſubſiſtence by their daily labour, they are placed in a ſtate of inferiority which commonly diſpoſes them to feel ſome reſpect for their maſter; they have an intereſt to avoid any difference with him; and in the execution of their work,

being conſtantly required to follow his directions, they are apt, in ſome degree, to acquire habits of ſubmiſſion to his will.

The relative condition of the labouring people, however, muſt vary conſiderably according to the differences which occur in the general ſtate of ſociety. In rude countries, even where domeſtic ſlavery is excluded, the chief labourers are either menial ſervants, or ſuch as cultivate the ground; and, as they generally continue for life in the ſervice of the ſame perſon, his influence over them is naturally very great. But, in commercial countries, the bond of union between the workmen and their employer is gradually looſened. There, the moſt numerous claſs of labourers are thoſe employed in ſubſerviency to trade or manufactures; and they are ſo indiſcriminately engaged in the ſervice of different perſons, that they feel but little the loſs of a particular maſter, with whom they have formed but a ſlight connection. When a country, at the ſame time, is rapidly advancing in trade, the demand for labourers is proportionably great; their wages are continually riſing;

riſing; inſtead of ſoliciting employment, they are courted to accept of it; and they enjoy a degree of affluence and of importance, which is frequently productive of inſolence and licentiouſneſs.

That the labouring people in Britain have, for ſome time, been raiſed to this enviable ſituation, is evident from a variety of circumſtances; from the high price of labour, and the difficulty of procuring workmen; from the abſurd attempts of the legiſlature to regulate their wages, and to prevent them from deſerting particular employments; from the zeal diſplayed by the lower orders in the vindication of their political, as well as of their private rights; and, above all, from the jealouſy and alarm with which this diſpoſition has, of late, ſo univerſally impreſſed their ſuperiors.

When a labourer has acquired ſo much property as will enable him, without wages, to ſubſiſt until he has manufactured a particular commodity, he may then gain, upon the ſale of it, a profit over and above the ordinary value of his labour. In proportion to the enlargement of his capital, his pro-

productions, by the employment of ſubordinate hands will be multiplied, and his profits, of courſe, extended. Thus, according as the buſineſs of producing and diſpoſing of commodities becomes more extenſive and complicated, it is gradually ſubdivided into various departments, and gives riſe to the ſeveral claſſes, of manufacturers, tradeſmen, and merchants.

To diſcover the different ſources of mercantile profit, we may diſtinguiſh two ſorts of ſtock, or capital, belonging to a manufacturer or merchant; the *circulating*, and the *permanent* ſtock; the former comprehending the goods which he brings to the market; the latter, the houſes, the machinery, and the various accommodations which he requires for the manufacture or ſale of his goods.

To a manufacturer, the circulating ſtock affords a profit, by enabling him to unite many different branches of labour upon the ſame commodity, and, conſequently, to ſave that expence of carriage, which would be incurred if thoſe branches were ſeparately performed in different places, and the amount

amount afterwards collected. If, for example, the ſeveral operations requiſite in the woollen manufacture were to be performed ſeparately, by workmen at a diſtance from each other, there would be an expence of carriage neceſſary to unite the effect of their ſeveral productions, which is totally avoided by collecting the different hands in the ſame neighbourhood, and accumulating their labour upon the ſame commodity. The manufacturer, therefore, draws a return for his capital, inaſmuch as it has been the means of ſhortening the labour, and conſequently of diminiſhing the expence of his manufacture.

It is unneceſſary to obſerve, that by the ſaving of carriage there is alſo a ſaving of *time*, which is no leſs valuable; and the manufacturer obtains an additional profit, according as, with the ſame labour, he can ſooner bring his goods to market.

As by collecting many hands in the ſame manufacture, the undertaker ſaves an actual expence, he alſo obtains a direct advantage by having it in his power to divide minutely, the ſeveral branches of labour among different workmen,

workmen, ſo that each acquires more ſkill and dexterity in the ſingle branch allotted to him, and is prevented from idling, and loſing time, as commonly happens, in paſſing from one branch to another. The prodigious effect of this diviſion of labour, by increaſing the quantity of work done in a given time, as well as by improving its quality, becomes alſo, like every other circumſtance tending to facilitate labour, a ſeparate ſource of profit to the manufacturer*.

To the merchant, or tradeſman, the circulating ſtock is the ſource of profit

* Perhaps part of the profit of a manufacturer may alſo be drawn from the workman, who, however, will have a full equivalent for what he thus reſigns. By working to a maſter he is ſure of conſtant employment, is ſaved the trouble of ſeeking out thoſe who may have occaſion for his labour, and avoids the anxiety ariſing from the danger of being thrown occaſionally idle. In return for theſe advantages, he willingly relinquiſhes to his maſter ſome part of what he can earn while employed. Accordingly in Scotland, where it is ſtill very common for good houſewives to manufacture linens for the uſe of their families, the weavers whom they employ, uſually demand wages ſomewhat higher than the ordinary rates paid by the manufacturers.

upon

upon ſimilar principles. It enables him to ſave the purchaſers from the trouble and expence of beſpeaking the goods before they ſtand in need of them, and of providing themſelves at once with more than they immediately want; while the quantity which he has collected, and the number of his cuſtomers, enſure to him the diſpoſal of the whole within a reaſonable time. The larger the ſtock of the merchant, provided it does not exceed the general demand, the ſaving which he thus procures to his cuſtomers, without loſs to himſelf, will be the more complete and certain.

With reſpect to *permanent* mercantile ſtock, conſiſting of the machinery, the houſes, and the various accommodations employed by manufacturers or traders, in the courſe of their buſineſs, it is intended for the ſole purpoſe of aſſiſting and promoting the operations upon *circulating* ſtock; and having therefore, ſtill further a tendency to ſhorten and facilitate labour, it muſt, upon that account, be alſo productive of a ſuitable profit.

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It ſhould ſeem, therefore, an evident concluſion from theſe obſervations, that the benefit reſulting from every ſpecies of trade or manufacture, is ultimately derived from *labour;* and that the profit ariſing from every branch of mercantile ſtock, whether permanent or circulating, is derived from its enabling the merchant, or manufacturer, to produce the ſame effect with leſs labour, and conſequently with leſs expence than would otherwiſe have been required.

It merits attention, however, that the whole revenue drawn by a merchant, or manufacturer, though in a looſe way commonly called his profit, does not with propriety come under this deſcription. Beſides the value of his capital, from its effect in ſhortening, facilitating, and ſuperſeding labour, he draws an adequate compenſation for his own efforts in putting that capital in motion, for his attention and ſkill in conducting the ſeveral parts of the buſineſs, and for the inconvenience he may ſuſtain in waiting a diſtant, and in ſome degree, an uncertain return. The former is properly the

the *rent* of capital: the latter may be called the *wages* of mercantile exertion. Theſe two branches of revenue are frequently ſeparated, inaſmuch as the merchant, or manufacturer, borrows a part of the capital with which he trades, and pays for it a regular *intereſt*, or as the acting partners of the commercial company draw ſalaries for their perſonal attendance.

Thoſe who obtain a revenue from capital, therefore, are either monied men who live upon the intereſt of their money, or mercantile adventurers, who draw, either a profit from their own capital, or a ſort of wages from trading with the capital of others. Both of theſe orders are much more independent in their circumſtances than the common labourer; but the former according to the extent of his revenue, is more independent than the latter. The mercantile adventurer draws his revenue from a multiplicity of cuſtomers, with whom he is commonly upon equal terms of affluence, and to each of whom he is but little obliged; but the monied man lives entirely upon his property,

property, and is obliged to nobody for any part of his maintenance.

When we conſider the changes in this reſpect, which have taken place in Britain ſince the period of the revolution; in what proportion both of theſe orders of capitaliſts have been multiplied; when we obſerve the number of common labourers who are daily converted into artificers, frequently vending their own productions; what crowds of people are continually riſing from the lower ranks, and diſpoſed of in the various branches of trade; how many have acquired, and how many more are in the high road of acquiring opulent fortunes; how univerſally mutual emulation, and mutual intercourſe, have diffuſed habits of induſtry, have baniſhed idleneſs, which is the parent of indigence, and have put it into the power of almoſt every individual, by the exertion of his own talents, to earn a comfortable ſubſiſtence; when, I ſay, we attend to the extent of theſe improvements, which affect the whole mercantile part of the inhabitants, we cannot entertain a doubt of their powerful efficacy

efficacy to propagate correſponding ſentiments, of perſonal independence, and to inſtil higher notions of general liberty.

The obſervations which have been made, with reſpect to the trader and capitaliſt, are, in a great meaſure, applicable to the cultivator and proprietor of land. The farmer, who by his labour and ſkill, and by the employment of ſtock, draws a revenue from the cultivation of land, is in circumſtances ſimilar to thoſe of the manufacturer. From his cattle, from his tools and inſtruments of huſbandry, and from the money expended in the management of his farm, he derives a profit ſuitable to their effect, in ſhortening and facilitating his labour; and the ground itſelf may be regarded as a part of his permanent ſtock, contributing, like a loom, or other piece of machinery, to the reſult of his operations. But as the ground has greater ſtability, as it appears of much greater importance than all the remaining ſtock of the farmer, and as in many caſes it belongs to a different perſon, the profit ariſing from it, which is regularly payable to the landlord, has been commonly

diſtinguiſhed under the name of *rent*, while that which ariſes from the other part of agricultural ſtock, is viewed in the ſame light with mercantile profit. There is, however, no eſſential difference between thoſe two branches of revenue; they both depend upon the ſame principles, and bear a regular proportion to the value of the reſpective funds from which they are drawn.

There is, indeed, one particular in which they require to be diſtinguiſhed; I mean, with reſpect to the degree of independence which, in different ſituations, they beſtow upon the poſſeſſor. In poor countries, where agriculture is in a low ſtate, the great value of land, compared with the other parts of agricultural ſtock, renders the employment of the latter in a great meaſure ſubordinate to that of the former; and reduces the people who cultivate the ground to be a ſort of ſervants or dependents of the proprietor. But the improvement of huſbandry gives more dignity to this uſeful profeſſion, and raiſes the condition of thoſe who exerciſe it. As the operations of the farmer

farmer become extenſive, his capital muſt be enlarged; and as he lays out greater expence in improvement, he muſt obtain a longer leaſe to afford him the proſpect of a return from the lands. He is thus totally emancipated from his former dependence; becomes more enterpriſing in proportion to his opulence; and upon the expiration of his leaſe, he finds that it is not more his object to obtain a good farm, than it is the intereſt of every landlord to obtain a good tenant. This has, for ſome time, been the general condition of the farmers in England; and to this independent ſtate they are quickly advancing in the more improvable parts of Scotland.

Such are the changes which, in the courſe of the preſent century, have taken place, and are ſtill rapidly advancing in Britain, with relation to the different branches of revenue, ariſing from the wages of labour, and from the employment of ſtock, either in trade, or in the cultivation of the earth; and with relation to the condition of the reſpective orders of men by whom thoſe branches of revenue are enjoyed.

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The tendency of improvement in all the arts of life, and in every trade or profeſſion, has been uniformly the ſame; to enable mankind more eaſily to gain a livelihood by the exerciſe of their talents, without being ſubject to the caprice, or caring for the diſpleaſure of others; that is, to render the lower claſſes of the people leſs dependent upon their ſuperiors.

It muſt not, however, be imagined, that this independent ſituation of mankind, with reſpect to the means of ſubſiſtence, will always prevent ſuch inequalities of fortune, as may create in ſome of the members of ſociety an influence over others. The unequal diſtribution of property, is a neceſſary conſequence of the different degrees of application or abilities, co-operating with numberleſs accidents, which retard or promote the pecuniary purſuits of individuals; and the poor will often find their account in courting the favour of the rich. Any attempt, upon the part of the public. to limit the free accumulation of wealth, would be fatal to that induſtry or exertion which is the foundation of national proſperity.

perity. Sound policy requires that every man ſhould feel a continual ſpur to his activity from the proſpect of enjoying at pleaſure, and diſpoſing of the fruits of his labour. But the circumſtances of a country, highly advanced in commerce and manufactures, are ſuch as, naturally, and without any interpoſition of government, have a tendency to moderate thoſe great differences of fortune, which, in a rude age, are uſually the ſource of tyranny and oppreſſion. Where a multitude of people are engaged in lucrative trades and profeſſions, it muſt commonly happen that number of competitors, placed in ſimilar circumſtances, will meet with nearly equal ſucceſs; and that their ſeveral acquiſitions will counterbalance each other, ſo as to prevent, in any one quarter, the growth of an influence that might be dangerous to the community. The ſame ſpirit, being univerſally, and in ſome meaſure equally diffuſed, and being ſubject to no obſtruction, either from the ſtate of ſociety, or from the injudicious regulations of the public, is likely to form ſuch a gradation of opulence, as leaving no

chaſm from the top to the bottom of the ſcale, will occaſion a continual approximation of the different ranks, and will frequently enable the inferior orders to preſs upon the ſuperior. "The toe of the peaſant comes ſo near the heel of the courtier, "that it galls his kibe."

The effect of ſuperiority in wealth, as I had occaſion to ſhew in a former part of this diſcourſe, is further diminiſhed in commercial countries, by the frequent alienation of eſtates. As perſons of low rank are incited by their ſituation to better their circumſtances, and commonly acquire ſuch habits of induſtry and frugality, as enable them to accumulate; thoſe who are born to great fortunes, are apt, on the other hand, to become idle and diſſipated, and living in all the expence which opulence renders faſhionable, are frequently tempted to ſquander their eſtates. Hence, opulent families are quickly reduced to indigence; and their place is ſupplied by profeſſional people from the lower orders; who, by the purchaſe of land, endeavour to procure that diſtinction which was the end of their labours.

labours. The deſcendants of theſe upſtarts, in a generation or two, uſually go the ſame round of luxury and extravagance, and finally experience the ſame reverſe of fortune. Property is thus commonly ſubjected to a conſtant rotation, which prevents it from conferring upon the owner the habitual reſpect and conſideration, derived from a long continued intercourſe between the poor and the rich.

To preſerve old families from this deſtruction became a great object in Britain, and in the other countries of Europe, as ſoon as commerce began to threaten the diſſolution of eſtates. Entails were invented to arreſt and ſecure the eſtate; titles of nobility, to preſerve the perſonal dignity of the poſſeſſor. But theſe contrivances were of little avail. When ſuch reſtrictions became inconſiſtent with the manners of the age, they could no longer be enforced. In England the fetters of an entail were, by the ingenuity of lawyers, gradually lightened, and at length eaſily ſtruck off; though in Scotland, a country in which ariſtocratic government was more firmly rooted, they ſtill remain in full force.

The rank of nobility being connected with political diſtinction, has hitherto maintained its ground, and continues to be the object of ambition; but when ſeparated from the eſtate which gave it ſupport, ſo far from being of ſervice to the owner, it operates as an excluſion from almoſt all the paths of induſtry, and ſeems to confer a mock-dignity upon real and hopeleſs indigence and ſervility.

The opulence of Britain, in the preſent century, it is evident, has greatly ſurpaſſed that of the preceding ages, in facilitating to the poor the means of accumulation, in multiplying to the rich thoſe artificial wants which produce a rapid circulation of eſtates, and conſequently, in ſubverting that permanent ſtate of property which is the foundation of all hereditary influence.

2. As the advancement of commerce and manufactures in Britain, has produced a ſtate of property highly favourable to liberty, ſo it has contributed to collect and arrange the inhabitants in a manner which enables them, with great facility to combine in aſſerting their privileges.

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When government has been ſo far eſtabliſhed as to maintain the general tranquillity, and to introduce peaceable manners; and when a ſet of magiſtrates, and rulers, are inveſted with an authority, confirmed by ancient uſage, and ſupported, perhaps, by an armed force, it cannot be expected that the people, ſingle and unconnected, will be able to reſiſt the oppreſſion of their governors; and their power of combining for this purpoſe, muſt depend very much upon their peculiar circumſtances. In ſmall ſtates, conſiſting merely of a capital city, with a narrow adjacent country, like thoſe of ancient Greece and Rome, the inhabitants were neceſſarily led to an intimate union and correſpondence; which appears to have been the chief cauſe of their being able, at an early period, to expel their petty princes, and eſtabliſh a popular government. But in large kingdoms, the people being diſperſed over a wide country, have ſeldom been capable of ſuch vigorous exertions. Living in petty villages, at a diſtance from one another, and having very imperfect means of communication, they are often but

but little affected by the hardſhips which many of their countrymen may ſuſtain from the tyranny of government; and a rebellion may be quelled in one quarter before it has time to break out in another. The efforts, which are occaſionally made, in different parts of the country, to limit the prerogative, being without union or concert, are commonly unſucceſsful; and therefore, inſtead of producing the effect intended, uſually terminate in the exultation of the crown. The unlucky inſurgents are obliged to make their peace with the ſovereign, by ſubmitting to new encroachments; and to wipe off their former demerits by aſſiſting to reduce their fellow-citizens to obedience. To this want of concert in the members of a wide country, we may aſcribe the riſe of the greater part of rude monarchies; and more eſpecially thoſe of the great Aſiatic nations.

From the progreſs, however, of trade and manufactures, the ſtate of a country, in this reſpect, is gradually changed. As the inhabitants multiply from the facility of procuring ſubſiſtence, they are collected in large

large bodies for the convenient exercise of their employments. Villages are enlarged into towns; and these are often swelled into populous cities. In all those places of resort, there arises large bands of labourers or artificers, who, by following the same employment, and by constant intercourse, are enabled, with great rapidity, to communicate all their sentiments and passions. Among these there spring up leaders, who give a tone and direction to their companions. The strong encourage the feeble; the bold animate the timid; the resolute confirm the wavering; and the movements of the whole mass proceed with the uniformity of a machine, and with a force that is often irresistible.

In this situation, a great proportion of the people are easily roused by every popular discontent, and can unite with no less facility in demanding a redress of grievances. The least ground of complaint, in a town, becomes the occasion of a riot; and the flames of sedition, spreading from one city to another, are blown up into a general insurrection.

Neither does this union arise merely from local situations; nor is it confined to the lower

lower clafs of thofe who are fubfervient to commerce and manufactures. By a conftant attention to profeffional objects, the fuperior orders of mercantile people become quick-fighted in difcerning their common intereft, and, at all times, indefatigable in purfuing it. While the farmer, employed in the feparate cultivation of his land, confiders only his own individual profit; while the landed gentleman feeks only to procure a revenue fufficient for the fupply of his wants, and is often unmindful of his own intereft as well as of every other; the merchant, though he never overlooks his private advantage, is accuftomed to connect his own gain with that of his brethren, and, is therefore, always ready to join with thofe of the fame profeffion, in foliciting the aid of government, and in promoting general meafures for the benefit of their trade.

The prevalence of this great mercantile affociation in Britain, has, in the courfe of the prefent century, become gradually more and more confpicuous. The clamour and tumultuary proceedings of the populace in the great towns are capable of penetrating

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the inmoſt receſſes of adminiſtration, of intimidating the boldeſt miniſter, and of diſplacing the moſt preſumptuous favourite of the back-ſtairs. The voice of the mercantile intereſt, never fails to command the attention of government, and when firm and unanimous, is even able to controul and direct the deliberations of the national councils. The methods which are ſometimes practiſed by miniſtry to divide this mercantile intereſt, and to divert its oppoſition to the meaſures of the crown, will fall more properly to be conſidered hereafter.

So much with regard to the progreſs of trade and manufactures in Britain, ſince the period of the revolution, and its conſequences in rendering the people opulent, as well as independent in their circumſtances. I ſhall now proceed to examine the tendency of this independence and opulence, to promote the cultivation of the liberal arts and ſciences, to extend knowledge and literature over the great body of a people, and to introduce opinions and ſentiments which may affect the nature of government.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.

How far the Advancement of Commerce and Manufactures has contributed to the Extenſion and Diffuſion of Knowledge and Literature.

IT is natural to ſuppoſe that a proficiency in thoſe practical arts, which multiply the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life will produce correſponding advances in general knowledge, and in the capacity of exerciſing the intellectual powers. Every practical art proceeds upon certain principles, diſcovered by experience and obſervation; and in the proceſs of different arts there are numberleſs analogies and reſemblances, which give riſe to various deductions and concluſions, and thus, by a chain of reaſoning, lead to new inventions and diſcoveries. The inexhauſtible varieties of analogy and reſemblance which occur in the objects around us, whether of art or nature, conſtitute the great fund

fund of general knowledge; and the faculty of diſcovering, and of arranging them, is juſtly regarded as the chief prerogative of the human underſtanding.

As the great wealth introduced by commerce and manufactures is, at the ſame time, very unequally divided, there ſprings up, of courſe, a numerous claſs of people, who, being born to affluent fortunes, are exempted from bodily labour, and who chooſing to throw aſide, in a great meaſure, the cares of buſineſs, indulge themſelves in what is called pleaſure. Being often deſtitute of that occupation which is neceſſary to preſerve a reliſh for enjoyment, and without which the mind ſinks into liſtleſs apathy and dejection. They ſeek amuſement by artificial modes of occupying their imagination, in ſports and diverſions, in the collection and embelliſhment of thoſe objects which are agreeable to the ſenſes, and in thoſe imitations and repreſentations of nature which are calculated to excite admiration, wonder and ſurpriſe. Hence the introduction and improvement of the elegant and fine arts, which entertain us by the exhibition of what is grand, new

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or beautiful, and which afford a delightful exercise to our taste, or a pleasing agitation of our passions.

The pursuits of mankind, however, are not limited to the objects of the common and mechanical, or of the elegant and fine arts. The first aim of every people is to procure subsistence; their next is to defend and secure their acquisitions. Men who live in the same society, or who have any intercourse with one another, are often linked together by the ties of sympathy and affection; as, on the other hand, they are apt, from opposite interests and passions, to dispute and quarrel, and to commit mutual injuries. From these different situations, they become sensible of the duties they owe to each other, and of the rights which belong to them in their various relations and capacities. A system of rules for enforcing those rights is gradually introduced, and the sciences of morality, of law, and of government, being more and more cultivated, give rise to a prodigious diversity of speculations and opinions. From the belief and the sentiments of mankind, in matters of religion,

religion, there ariſes another ſcience, not leſs intricate than the former, and which has proved even more fertile in diſquiſition and controverſy. The remarkable appearances in the material world, the great changes in nature, the qualities and uſes of the ſeveral productions of the earth; all theſe become in like manner, the ſubjects of attention and inquiry, and afford copious ſources of knowledge and ſpeculation.

While arts and ſciences are thus advancing, they are gradually ſeparated into different branches, each of which occupies the attention, and becomes the peculiar province of ſome individuals. The great branches of mechanical labour afford occupation to ſeparate claſſes of workmen and artificers, who gain a livelihood by their peculiar employments; and according as every ſpecies of labour becomes more complicated, the ſeparate claſſes of the people who derive a maintenance from it, are further ſubdivided. A ſimilar diviſion follows of courſe in thoſe elegant and fine arts which become the ſubject of lucrative employments; as in painting, ſculpture, and muſic.

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Even in the cultivation of the ſciences, the circumſtances of ſociety have commonly occaſioned a ſeparation of certain learned profeſſions; and directed, in ſome meaſure, the attention of numerous claſſes of men to particular departments of knowledge. The diſeaſes and accidents by which health is impaired have given riſe to the medical profeſſion, with its reſpective diviſions, connected with various branches of natural ſcience. The diſputes and quarrels among mankind, with the modes which have been found expedient for ſettling their contentions without having recourſe to arms, the execution of the various deeds requiſite for the ſecurity and tranſmiſſion of property, and the direction of thoſe obſervances and forms which, in moſt countries, are eſtabliſhed for aſcertaining and confirming pecuniary tranſactions; theſe branches of buſineſs have given employment to attornies and lawyers, whoſe profeſſion leads them to become acquainted with the rules of juſtice, and with the whole ſyſtem of legal proceedings. From the belief of a Deity, and the correſponding ſentiments which it inſpires, has ariſen

ariſen the profeſſion of the clergy; whoſe buſineſs it is to preſide over the public acts of religious worſhip, and who are naturally entruſted with the office of inſtructing the people in the great duties of morality.

But even in thoſe caſes where particular ſciences are not immediately connected with any profeſſion, the progreſs of ſtudy and ſpeculation will diſpoſe individuals, according to their peculiar talents or diſpoſition, to give different directions to their inquiries, and to ſeparate the objects of their ſpeculative purſuits.

There can be no doubt that this diviſion in the labours, both of art and of ſcience, is calculated for promoting their improvement. From the limited powers both of the mind and the body, the exertions of an individual are likely to be more vigorous and ſucceſsful when confined to a particular channel, than when diffuſed over a boundleſs expanſe. The athlete who limited his application to one of the gymnaſtic exerciſes, was commonly enabled to practiſe it with more

more dexterity than he who ſtudied to become a proficient in them all.

But though the ſeparation of different trades and profeſſions, together with the conſequent diviſion of labour and application in the exerciſe of them, has a tendency to improve every art or ſcience, it has frequently an oppoſite effect upon the perſonal qualities of thoſe individuals who are engaged in ſuch employments. In the ſciences, indeed, and even in the liberal arts, the application of thoſe who follow particular profeſſions can ſeldom be ſo much limited as to prove deſtructive to general knowledge. In all liberal occupations or ſcientific profeſſions, there are certain principles to be ſtudied by every perſon engaged in the practice; principles which admit of an extenſive application to a variety of objects, and which, in many caſes, cannot be properly applied without exerciſing the united powers of imagination and judgment. The practitioner, therefore, who is in ſuch caſes, engroſſed by the objects of his profeſſion, may have an air of pedantry to thoſe who

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are occupied in different purſuits, but can ſeldom with juſtice be regarded as deſtitute of knowledge or of intellectual exertion. But the mechanical arts admit of ſuch minute diviſions of labour, that the workmen belonging to a manufacture are each of them employed, for the moſt part, in a ſingle manual operation, and have no concern in the reſult of their ſeveral productions. It is hardly poſſible that theſe mechanics ſhould acquire extenſive information or intelligence. In proportion as the operation which they perform is narrow, it will ſupply them with few ideas; and according as the neceſſity of obtaining a livelihood obliges them to double their induſtry, they have the leſs opportunity or leiſure to procure the means of obſervation, or to find topics of reflection from other quarters. As their employment requires conſtant attention to an object which can afford no variety of occupation to their minds, they are apt to acquire an habitual vacancy of thought, unenlivened by any proſpects, but ſuch as are derived from the future wages of their labour, or from the

grateful returns of bodily repoſe and ſleep. They become, like machines, actuated by a regular weight, and performing certain movements with great celerity and exactneſs, but of ſmall compaſs, and unfitted for any other uſe. In the intervals of their work, they can draw but little improvement from the ſociety of companions, bred to ſimilar employments, with whom, if they have much intercourſe, they are moſt likely to ſeek amuſement in drinking and diſſipation.

It ſhould ſeem, therefore, that in countries highly advanced in commerce and manufactures, the abilities and character of the labouring people, who form the great body of a nation, are liable to be affected by circumſtances of an oppoſite nature. Their continual attention to the objects of their profeſſion, together with the narrowneſs of thoſe objects, has a powerful tendency to render them ignorant and ſtupid. But the progreſs of ſcience and literature and of the liberal arts, among the higher claſſes, muſt on the other hand contribute to enlighten the common people, and to ſpread a degree of the ſame improvements over the whole com-

community. There is in all mankind a diſpoſition to admire and to imitate their ſuperiors; and the faſhions, opinions, and ways of thinking, adopted by men of high rank, are apt to deſcend very quickly to perſons of inferior ſtation. Whenever any branch of learning becomes extenſively uſeful, thoſe who have a common intereſt in attaining it, are enabled, by joining together, to hire an inſtructor at an expence moderate to individuals. Schools and ſeminaries of education are thus introduced, and they are ſometimes promoted by the well-meant encouragement and protection of the public. By their induſtry, different ſorts of inſtruction are brought into a common market, are gradually cheapened by mutual competition, and, being more and more accommodated to the demands of ſociety, become, as far as it is neceſſary, acceſſible even to the poor. Thus, in commercial countries, the important accompliſhments of reading, writing, and accounting, are uſually communicated at ſuch eaſy rates, as to be within the reach of the lower orders.

The publication of books affords another medium for the circulation of knowledge, the benefit of which muſt extend, in ſome degree, to every member of the community. When, among perſons in affluent circumſtances, who are exempted from bodily labour, reading becomes a common amuſement, it is to be expected that their example in this, as in other things, will have an influence upon their inferiors; and, although the publications likely to fall into the hands of the common people will be ſuch as are ſuited to their taſte, and therefore, probably, not the beſt calculated for conveying inſtruction, they cannot fail to enlarge the imagination of the readers beyond mere profeſſional objects, and even to communicate, perhaps, ſomething of the opinions which prevail among the higher claſſes, upon the great popular topics of religion, morality, and government.

The effect of the cultivation proceeding from theſe different ſources, is probably as remarkable at preſent, in Great Britain, as it has ever been in any commercial country, ancient or modern; but whether, upon the whole,

whole, the artificial education thus communicated to the lower orders of the people, be ſufficient to counterbalance the diſadvantages of their natural ſituation, there may be good reaſon to doubt.

In ruder and more ſimple times, before labour is much ſubdivided, the whole ſtock of knowledge exiſting in a country will be ſcanty, but it will be more equally diffuſed over the different ranks, and each individual of the lower orders will have nearly the ſame opportunities and motives with his ſuperiors, for exerting the different powers of his mind. The rude mechanic, reſiding in a ſmall town, is forced to beſtow his attention, ſucceſſively, on many objects very different from each other. Not finding conſtant employment in one branch of manufacture, he exerciſes ſeveral, and furniſhes himſelf with many of the tools requiſite for each; he probably makes part of his own clothes, aſſiſts in building his own houſe and thoſe of his neighbours, and cultivates, or directs his wife and children in cultivating, a ſmall patch of ground, on which he raiſes part of his proviſions. As he muſt

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buy the materials, and ſell or barter the produce of his labour, he is alſo, in ſome reſpects, a merchant; and, in this capacity, he is led to the obſervation of character, as well as to ſome ſpeculation reſpecting the moſt advantageous times and places, for making his little bargains. When we add, that he is likewiſe trained to arms, for the purpoſe of aſſiſting in defending the town of which he is a citizen, we muſt ſee that his ſituation, and conſequently, his character, will be very different from that of a mechanic, in a more advanced ſociety.

In this manner, all the members of a rude nation, being forced to exerciſe a great number of unconnected profeſſions, and individually to provide for themſelves, what each ſtands in need of, their attention is directed to a variety of objects; and their knowledge is extended in proportion. No man relies upon the exertions of his neighbour; but each employs, for the relief of his wants, or in defence of what belongs to him, either the ſtrength of his body or the ingenuity of his mind, all the talents which he has been able to acquire, all the faculties

with

with which nature has endowed him. By experience, therefore, he learns to conduct himſelf in many different ſituations, to guard againſt the dangers to which he is expoſed, and to extricate himſelf from the difficulties and embarraſsments in which he may be involved. Unlike the mechanics of a commercial nation, who have each permitted all their talents, except in ſingle and peculiar branches, to lie dormant and uſeleſs; but who combine, like the wheels of a machine, in producing a complicated ſyſtem of operations, the inhabitants of a rude country have ſeparately preſerved, and kept in action, all the original powers of man; but in their united capacity, and as members of a community, they have added very little to the independent efforts of every individual.

If we compare the mechanics of different commercial ſtates, we ſhall probably find that the reſpective degrees of their knowledge and intellectual attainments correſpond with the foregoing obſervation. In England, and in the other mercantile countries of Europe, it is believed, that, in proportion

portion to the advancement of manufactures, the common people have leſs information, and leſs curioſity upon general topics; leſs capacity, beyond the limits of their own employment, of entering into converſation, or of conducting, with propriety and dexterity, the petty tranſactions which accident may throw in their way.

This is perhaps the chief foundation of the common remark, which is made by the Engliſh, concerning the ſuperior ſagacity and cunning of their neighbours in the northern part of the iſland. As in Scotland commerce and manufactures have made leſs progreſs than in England, the great body of the people have not acquired the ſame habits of induſtry, nor are they ſo much engroſſed by narrow mechanical employments. The man, therefore, has not been ſo entirely ſtripped of his mental powers, and converted into the more inſtrument of labour. As the ſame individual often follows a greater variety of occupations, his underſtanding is more exerciſed, and his wits are more ſharpened, by ſuch different attentions. He is more capable of turning his hand to all kinds

kinds of work, but he is much leſs a proficient in any. In the lower orders of ſociety, where there are fewer reſtraints from education, it may be expected, that, in proportion as the people are more intelligent and quick-ſighted, they will be more apt, in their mutual intercourſe, to have their private intereſt in view, as well as to be more artful and ſubtle in purſuing it *.

Even in the ſame country, there is a ſenſible difference between different profeſſions; and, according as every ſeparate employment gives riſe to a greater ſubdiviſion of workmen and artificers, it has a greater tendency to withdraw from them the means of intellectual improvement. The buſineſs of agriculture, for example, is leſs capable of a minute ſubdiviſion of labour than the greater part of mechanical employments. The ſame workman has often occaſion to plough,

* The inhabitants of the ſouthern counties in Scotland have applied the ſame remark to thoſe parts of the country which are ſtill further behind in commercial improvements; and they have introduced a proverbial expreſſion to that purpoſe: they ſay, "a perſon is too "far north, that we ſhould venture to have dealings "with him."

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to ſow, and to reap; to cultivate the ground for different purpoſes, and to prepare it various productions for the market. He is obliged alternately to handle very oppoſite tools and inſtruments; to repair, and ever ſometimes, to make them for his own uſe; and always to accommodate the different parts of his labour to the change of the ſeaſons, and to the variations of the weather. He is employed in the management and rearing of cattle, becomes frequently a grazier and a corn-merchant, and is unavoidably initiated in the myſteries of the horſe-jockey. What an extent of knowledge, therefore, muſt he poſſeſs! What a diverſity of talents muſt he exerciſe, in compariſon with the mechanic, who employs his whole labour in ſharpening the point, or in putting on the head of a pin! How different the education of thoſe two perſons! The pin-maker, who commonly lives in a town, will have more of the faſhionable improvements of ſociety than the peaſant; he will undoubtedly be better dreſſed; he will, in all probability, have more book-learning, as well as leſs coarſeneſs in the

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tone of his voice, and leſs uncouthneſs in his appearance and deportment. Should they both be enamoured of the ſame female, it is natural to ſuppoſe, that he would make the better figure in the eyes of his miſtreſs, and that he would be moſt likely to carry the prize. But in a bargain, he would, aſſuredly, be no match for his rival. He would be greatly inferior in real intelligence and acuteneſs; much leſs qualified to converſe with his ſuperiors, to take advantage of their foibles, to give a plauſible account of his meaſures, or to adapt his behaviour to any peculiar and unexpected emergency.

The circumſtance now mentioned affords a view not very pleaſant in the hiſtory of human ſociety. It were to be wiſhed that wealth and knowledge ſhould go hand in hand, and that the acquiſition of the former ſhould lead to the poſſeſſion of the latter. Conſidering the ſtate of nations at large, it will, perhaps, be found that opulence and intellectual improvements are pretty well balanced, and that the ſame progreſs in commerce and manufactures which occaſions

ſions an encreaſe of the one, creates à proportional acceſſion of the other. But, among individuals, this diſtribution of things is far from being ſo uniformly eſtabliſhed; and, in the lower orders of the people, it appears to be completely reverſed. The claſs of mechanics and labourers, by far the moſt numerous in a commercial nation, are apt, according as they attain more affluent and independent circumſtances, to be more withdrawn and debarred from extenſive information; and are likely, in proportion as the reſt of the community advance in knowledge and literature, to be involved in a thicker cloud of ignorance and prejudice. Is there not reaſon to apprehend, that the common people, inſtead of ſharing the advantages of national proſperity, are thus in danger of loſing their importance, of becoming the dupes of their ſuperiors, and of being degraded from the rank which they held in the ſcale of ſociety?

The ſeparation of a whole people into two great claſſes, of which the one was diſtinguiſhed by knowledge and intelligence, the

the other by the oppoſite qualities, occurred very remarkably over a great part of Europe, in what are called the dark-ages. A very numerous clergy, who had engroſſed all the learning of the times, and whoſe underſtandings were whetted by an intereſted and inceſſant activity, formed the one claſs. The laiety, comprehending the military people, continually engaged in war and depredation, and the peaſantry, reduced to the ſtate of villainage, both equally ſunk in ignorance and ſuperſtition, compoſed the other. In conſequence of this unfortunate arrangement, the miniſters of a religion which taught men to renounce all conſiderations of worldly intereſt, taking advantage of their ſuperior talents, and uniting in a ſyſtem of deep-laid fraud and deception, perſuaded their ſimple flock to reſign ſo great a proportion of their poſſeſſions, and to ſubmit to a ſeries of ſuch extenſive encroachments, as at length eſtabliſhed an eccleſiaſtical tyranny, which the efforts of more than two centuries of diffuſive ſcience and philoſophy, have hardly been able to overturn.

But

But although commerce and manufactures, have, in like manner, a tendency to form two diſtinct and ſeparate claſſes of the learned and the ignorant, there is no reaſon to ſuſpect that the former will abuſe their ſuperiority, by perverting it to the hurt or detriment of the latter. It is plainly the intereſt of the higher ranks to aſſiſt in cultivating the minds of the common people, and in reſtoring to them that knowledge which they may be ſaid to have ſacrificed to the general proſperity. A certain degree of information and intelligence, of acquaintance with the good or bad conſequences which flow from different actions, and ſyſtems of behaviour, is neceſſary for ſuggeſting proper motives to the practice of virtue, and for deterring mankind from the commiſſion of crimes. It ſurely is of the utmoſt conſequence to the public, that men in the lower orders ſhould be ſober and induſtrious, honeſt and faithful, affectionate and conſcientious in their domeſtic concerns, peaceable in their manners, and averſe from riot and diſorder. But how can it be expected that they will perſevere in the practice

practice of the various duties incumbent upon them, unleſs they have acquired habits of obſervation and reflection; unleſs they have been taught to ſet a high value upon character and reputation, and are able to diſcover that ſuch a conduct is no leſs conducive to their own intereſt, than to that of others. To render them uſeful in their ſeveral relations, either as men or citizens, it is requiſite that they ſhould be in a condition to form a proper eſtimate of the objects which will promote their true happineſs, to detect thoſe falſe appearances which might frequently miſlead them, and to guard againſt the errors in religion, morality, or government, which deſigning men may endeavour to propagate. The doctrine maintained by ſome politicians, that the ignorance of the labouring people is of advantage, by ſecuring their patience and ſubmiſſion under the yoke which their unequal fortune has impoſed upon them, is no leſs abſurd, than it is revolting to all the feelings of humanity. The ſecurity derived from ſo mean a ſource is temporary and fallacious. It is liable to be undermined by the intrigues of

of any plauſible projector, or ſuddenly overthrown by the caſual breath of popular opinion.

As the circumſtances of commercial ſociety are unfavourable to the mental improvements of the populace, it ought to be the great aim of the public to counteract, in this reſpect, the natural tendency of mechanical employments, and by the inſtitution of ſchools and ſeminaries of education, to communicate, as far as poſſible, to the moſt uſeful, but humble claſs of citizens, that knowledge which their way of life has, in ſome degree, prevented them from acquiring. It is needleſs to obſerve how imperfect ſuch inſtitutions have hitherto been. The principal ſchools and colleges of Europe have been intended for the benefit merely of the higher orders; and even for this purpoſe, the greater part of them are not very judiciouſly modelled. But men of rank and fortune, and in general thoſe who are exempted from bodily labour, have little occaſion, in this reſpect, for the aid of the public, and perhaps would be better ſupplied, if left, in a great meaſure, to their own exertions.

exertions. The execution, however, of a liberal plan for the inſtruction of the lower orders, would be a valuable addition to thoſe efforts, for the maintenance of the poor, for the relief of the diſeaſed and infirm, and for the correction of the malefactor, which have proceeded from the humanity and public ſpirit of the preſent age. The pariſh ſchools in Scotland, are the only extenſive proviſions of that nature hitherto known in the iſland; and though it muſt be confeſſed that they are but ill calculated for the purpoſes of general education, the advantages reſulting from them, even in their preſent ſtate, have been diſtinctly felt, and very univerſally acknowledged.

CHAPTER V.

The Separation of the different Branches of Knowledge; and the Diviſion of the liberal Arts and of the Sciences.

TO explain the political changes, ariſing in commercial countries, from the progreſs of liberal education, it may be proper that we ſhould examine more particularly the principal branches of knowledge which are likely to be cultivated, and to conſider how far they will probably influence the opinions, the character, and manners of ſociety.

Without entering into any ſpeculation concerning the ſeparate exiſtence of ſpiritual and corporeal ſubſtances, we may obſerve, that all the objects of knowledge appear naturally to reduce themſelves into two great claſſes; the one relating to the operations of thought and intelligence; the other, to the qualities and operations of inanimate matter.

Men

Men are diſpoſed more eaſily and readily to ſurvey the corporeal objects around them than to direct their attention to the operations of their own thinking faculties. The ſtudy of inanimate nature, or phyſics, was accordingly the firſt branch of philoſophy, upon which the ſages of antiquity employed themſelves, and upon which, after the revival of letters, any conſiderable progreſs was made. It extended to the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and to the moſt remarkable changes produced upon this earth; and it led to an examination of all ſuch natural objects as are calculated to excite admiration or peculiar attention; of the winds and the tides, of thunder and lightening; of the properties of air, of water, of fire, of electricity, of magnetiſm.

While mere curioſity excited mankind to an examination of the moſt remarkable changes and appearances upon the great theatre of the univerſe, an application to the practical arts of life, called them to a more minute inveſtigation of particular objects. The employment of curing diſeaſes and wounds, produced an attentive enquiry into

the medical virtues of plants and minerals. The progreſs of manufactures led to the diſcovery of the mechanical powers, and to the combination of theſe in the conſtruction of machines. The vain attempts of an ignorant age to accompliſh the tranſmutation of metals, and the prolongation of life beyond its natural boundaries, gradually ſuggeſted many wonderful effects of heat and mixture, and at length produced the modern ſcience of chemiſtry, which after incurring the ridicule that might be expected from its original pretenſions, has made ſuch progreſs in compounding and analyſing the different parts of matter as to be rendered equally ſubſervient to the improvement of the arts, and to the progreſs of agreeable ſpeculation.

As the ſeveral bodies, which were thus to be examined in a variety of lights, became gradually more numerous and complex, the advantage of arranging and reducing them into claſſes, was proportionally more apparent, and gave riſe to the ſcience of natural hiſtory with its different ſubdiviſions.

In the inveſtigation of all the general laws of nature, and in many of the practical

arts,

arts, it is often requiſite to enumerate and compare the number, the magnitude, and the figure of different bodies; whence the ſciences of geometry and calculation, which contain the concluſions deducible from ſuch relations, were introduced, and applied to all the branches of natural and mechanical knowledge.

Such are the principal branches of ſcience relating to corporeal objects. The ſciences founded upon the operation of our mental faculties may be divided into three great claſſes, in each of which there is room for many ſubdiviſions.

The good or bad behaviour of thoſe who live in ſociety with us, their virtues and vices, cannot fail very early to excite our attention, and to intereſt our feelings; while we ſoon perceive that theſe perſons exerciſe a ſimilar judgment upon us; and this leads us to reflect upon our own conduct, and to regard our own actions in the light in which they appear to others. The ſpeculations, together with the practical rules and obſervations, ariſing from this important view of ſociety,

ſociety, form the ſcience of ethics, or morality.

To account for the uncommon events which occur in the affairs of this world, or for the revolutions which happen in the ſtate of natural objects, mankind, in reaſoning by analogy, from experience of the movements and changes produced by themſelves, have had recourſe, almoſt univerſally, to the agency of ſuperior beings, poſſeſſed of intelligence and powers reſembling, but ſuperior in degree to the human. From a belief in the exiſtence of ſuch beings, and from the conſideration of their peculiar relations to ourſelves, together with that of their capacity or diſpoſition of doing us good or harm, has ariſen the ſcience of religion, comprehending a ſyſtem of religious opinions and duties.

Beſide thoſe emotions and paſſions which lay a foundation for morality and religion, and which appear eſſential to the comfortable exiſtence of man in the ſocial ſtate, there are other mental operations which contribute to adorn and embelliſh human ſociety by encreaſing its elegant enjoyments. Theſe

are

are the effects of what is beautiful or ſublime, either in art or nature; from which are derived the pleaſures of taſte, and what are called the fine arts. In all theſe arts, the practical rules give riſe to an inveſtigation of the principles upon which they are founded, and to a ſcientific deduction of the pleaſures which are produced from their different ſources, and thus the art and the ſcience are made, in each caſe, to accompany one another; and the pleaſure derived from the ſenſes is heightened by an agreeable exerciſe of the underſtanding.

As, in theſe different views, the powers exerted by intelligent beings are highly intereſting, as they are numerous, and wonderfully diverſified, ſeparated from each other by ſlender and almoſt imperceptible boundaries, and frequently combined in producing reſults which cannot eaſily be traced to their reſpective cauſes, it ſoon became an important object, to enumerate and to arrange the various operations of our thinking principle, to analyze them, to compare them together, and to diſcover their ſeveral relations. Theſe inveſtigations have been applied,

plied, though perhaps with little ſucceſs, not only to man, but alſo to ſuperior, and even to inferior orders of intelligence. Hence, the ſcience of metaphyſics, which may be regarded as auxiliary and ſubordinate to morality, religion, and the fine arts, and which, in the ſciences founded upon the effects of our various mental exertions, appears to hold the ſame place that is held by natural hiſtory, in the ſciences relating to corporeal objects.

With reſpect to the two great branches of ſcience, of which an outline has been ſuggeſted, it muſt be admitted that natural philoſophy and the ſeveral ſciences connected with it, have no immediate effect in extending or improving our ideas with relation to government; further than as all the different branches of knowledge co-operate in diſpelling prejudices, in ſtrengthening the intellectual powers, and in promoting an ardent zeal in the diſcovery of truth. It merits attention, however, that the advancement of natural knowledge, in all its branches, is highly ſubſervient to the improvement of the common arts of life, and conſequently, by promoting opu-

lence

ence and independence in the great body of a people, muſt contribute, in proportion, to inſpire them with ſentiments of liberty. To enable the inferior ranks to gain an eaſy ſubſiſtence by their labour is to lay the beſt foundation of popular government.

The exerciſe of the practical arts can hardly fail to ſuggeſt an inveſtigation of the general principles upon which they are founded, and to produce diſcoveries which may be uſeful, in facilitating the different kinds of labour, or in penetrating the ſecret operations of nature. It ſeems reaſonable to ſuppoſe, therefore, that ſuch improvements as take their origin from the higher claſs of artizans, or from profeſſional men who have had the advantage of a liberal education, would meet with the greateſt encouragement in Britain, where manufactures have, for a century paſt, been more ſucceſsfully cultivated than in any other part of Europe, and where, of courſe, a more extenſive market has been provided for every profitable invention. Whether this market has been occaſionally ſupplied by natives, or by foreigners, invited

invited into the country by the proſpect of emolument, is of little importance.

Thoſe improvements, on the contrary, which are the fruits of mere leiſure and curioſity, and which afford occupation to the ſpeculative philoſopher, have perhaps, of late, been more ſucceſsfully cultivated in ſome other European countries. The great genius of Newton, indeed, about a century ago, produced in this iſland a rapid advancement of true philoſophy; while the high reputation of Des Cartes, in France, gave an unlucky bias to his countrymen, and diſpoſed them to adopt his erroneous and chimerical doctrines. But though natural philoſophy was thus retarded, it came at length to be more cultivated in France, and in ſome other parts of Europe, than in Britain; becauſe, from the deſpotical government in thoſe countries, the inhabitants were, in ſome meaſure, debarred from the more generally intereſting inquiries upon religion, morality, and politics, and were confined in their ſpeculations, either to matters of taſte, and abſtracted ſpeculation, or to thoſe depending

pending on the nature and operations of corporeal objects. Their exertions, therefore, have been the more conſpicuous in that particular ſphere to which they were limited; and in mathematical learning, in the ſeveral branches of phyſics, in chemiſtry, and in natural hiſtory, it ſhould ſeem that their ſuperior proficiency can hardly be diſputed.

It cannot, however, eſcape the obſervation of thoſe who attend to the hiſtory of literature, that, in moſt countries, after philoſophical reſearches have made a certain progreſs, they commonly verge more and more to the purſuits of natural knowledge. To be ſatisfied of this, we need only conſult the memoirs of thoſe literary ſocieties, in the different parts of Europe, which have been lately publiſhed, as that ſpecies of philoſophy excited the earlieſt attention of mankind, ſo it appears calculated to arreſt the curioſity of the moſt numerous claſs, in thoſe ages when learning has arrived at full maturity. In our inquiries concerning the faculties and operations of the human mind, it ſoon becomes difficult to add to the ſtock of knowledge already acquired, or to exhibit ſuch views

views and reaſonings as will contain much novelty or entertainment. It even requires peculiar acuteneſs and diſcernment in treating of thoſe intricate ſubjects, to attain clear and diſtinct conceptions of what is already known, and to explain, in a manner ſufficiently intelligible, the opinions of preceding philoſophers. But the ſtudy of external nature, at leaſt in many of its branches, requires no more than common underſtanding, with an ardent curioſity and perſeverance of application. Every man who with the power of diviſing new experiments can ſubmit to the patient examination of the contents of a crucible; he who can obſerve the ſeveral parts of a plant and aſſign it its proper place in a general ſyſtem of claſſification, or who having made new and accurate inquiries into the economy of animals, can faithfully report and clearly explain the reſult of his inquiries; every ſuch perſon is capable of increaſing our knowledge of nature, and of acquiring ſome degree of a literary reputation. We need not be ſurpriſed, therefore, that theſe branches of ſcience, which are adapted to the capacity of the greateſt number,

ber, and in which the labours of mankind are moſt likely to be requited with ſuitable proficiency and information, ſhould be moſt univerſally purſued, and become the moſt popular.

In our preſent inquiry it would be improper to enter into any further detail concerning the diviſions of natural knowledge, which are ſo remotely connected with the political ſtate of the nation. But in exhibiting a view of the changes in the tide of popular opinions which have taken place during the preſent century, it ſeems requiſite to examine more particularly the ſciences which immediately relate to the faculties and operations of the mind, and to conſider how far the progreſs of ſpeculation, and diſcuſſion, in matters of morality, religion, or taſte, have influenced the ſentiments of the people with relation to government.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

The Effects of Commerce and Manufactures, and of Opulence and Civilization, upon the Morals of a People.

THAT the diſpoſitions and behaviour of man are liable to be influenced by the circumſtances in which he is placed, and by his peculiar education and habits of life, is a propoſition which few perſons will be inclined to controvert. But how far this influence reaches, and what differences are to be found between the morals of rude and of civilized nations, it is not ſo eaſy to determine. The fact, I believe, has been ſeldom examined with that impartiality and deliberation which its importance requires. Moral and religious writers have uſually thought proper to treat the ſubject in the ſtyle of ſatire and invective, and in declaiming againſt the vices of their own times, have been led to exalt the merit of diſtant ages.

ages. A late celebrated author, * poſſeſſed of uncommon powers of eloquence, has gone ſo far as to maintain, firſt in a popular diſcourſe, and afterwards in a long ſerious diſſertation, that the rude and ſavage life is the parent of all the virtues, the vices of mankind being the proper and peculiar offspring of opulence and civilization.

Inſtead of combating, or of criticiſing ſuch paradoxical opinions, it is propoſed to examine the effects of poverty and riches, of ſimplicity and refinement, upon practical morality; and to compare the predominant virtues and vices of the different periods of ſociety. We ſhall thence be enabled to diſcover the influence which the commercial improvements of Great Britain have produced upon the moral character of the nation, and how far this influence has affected the political ſtate of the people.

It ſhould ſeem that the moſt remarkable differences, exhibited in the manners of poliſhed and of barbarous nations, relate to

* Rouſſeau.

the

the virtues of courage and fortitude, of ſobriety and temperance, of juſtice and generoſity.

Section 1.

Of Courage and Fortitude.

Courage and fortitude are virtues, which, though reſembling each other in ſome of the principal features, are eaſily and clearly diſtinguiſhed. They are called forth on different occaſions; and they do not always exiſt in the ſame perſons. Courage conſiſts in a ſteady reſolution of ſubmitting to ſome great evil, which being future, is in ſome meaſure uncertain, and takes the name of danger. Fortitude conſiſts in bearing a preſent pain or uneaſineſs with firmneſs and reſignation. Courage ſuppoſes an active and voluntary exertion: Fortitude, a mere paſſive ſuffering. The exertion of courage is oppoſed and often prevented by the paſſion of fear, which magnifies and exaggerates all uncertain evils. The exerciſe of forti-

tude is counteracted by that weakneſs of mind which deſtroys the power of reflection, and renders us incapable of counterbalancing our preſent pain, by the recollection of any agreeable circumſtance in our condition. Great calamities, and ſuch as are of a perſonal nature, ſeem to be the objects of courage; and the moſt conſpicuous triumph of this virtue appears in conquering the fear of death. But fortitude may frequently be diſplayed in ſupporting the long continuance of ſmall as well as of great evils; in ſuffering ridicule, ſhame, and diſappointments, andin ſubmitting with patience and alacrity to the numerous train of vexations "which fleſh is heir to."

Both courage and fortitude are promoted by every circumſtance which leads to the exerciſe of thoſe virtues; for here, as in all other caſes, men are, by the power of habit, inured to ſuch exertions and ſufferings as at firſt were formidable and difficult.

In another view, thoſe two virtues are improved by oppoſite circumſtances. A man is excited to expoſe himſelf to danger, from

the conſideration that his neighbours are attentive to his conduct; and that, entering with lively ſenſibility into his feelings, they will applaud and admire him for his courage, or undervalue and deſpiſe him for the want of it. He who fights a duel, upon ſome trifling punctilio, is inſtigated to make that exertion, not by the value of the object, which has produced the quarrel, but from a ſenſe of honour; a deſire of maintaining the good opinion of others, and of avoiding contempt and diſgrace. In all the exertions of courage, it will be found that this forms a weighty conſideration; and in many, that it becomes the principal motive.

Our fortitude, on the other hand, is improved by the want of humanity, and is diminiſhed by the exquiſite fellow-feeling of thoſe who live with us. In our afflictions, the commiſeration and ſympathy of our intimate friends awakens our ſenſibility to our diſtreſs, betrays us into unavailing lamentations, and makes us give way to all the weakneſs of ſorrow and deſpondency. But in the company of our diſtant acquaintance,

ance, we are aſhamed of ſuch tenderneſs, we exert ourſelves to reſtrain and to conceal our emotions; if we are able to command our thoughts, we endeavour to ſuggeſt indifferent ſubjects of converſation, and to prevent any expreſſion from eſcaping us which may be diſguſting or diſagreeable to thoſe with whom we converſe. By thus adapting our behaviour to the general ſtandard of the people around us, we acquire habits, either of indulgence or of reſtraint. If our companions are kind and affectionate, attentive to our diſtreſſes, and eager to relieve them, we are encouraged to lean upon their ſympathy and aſſiſtance, and loſing the firmneſs and vigour of our minds become unable to ſtand, alone and unmoved, amid the various trials with which we may be viſited. Should we happen, on the contrary, to be caſt in the ſociety of perſons who are cold and indifferent, "unuſed to the melting mood," we become proportionably ſhy and reſerved, diſdaining, by our complaints, to ſolicit that pity which we are not likely to obtain, and learning to endure, without repining, and without

ſhrinking, whatever afflictions may befal us. By the continuance of ſuch efforts, we attain more and more the command of our paſſions, and are enabled to moderate our ſenſibility to painful or uneaſy impreſſions.*

According as any perſon is placed, more or leſs, in either of thoſe two ſituations, we may commonly obſerve, in this reſpect, a ſuitable difference of temper and diſpoſition. The child who is conſtantly indulged by his fooliſh parents, and taught to expect that every body ſhould run to ſerve him, is perpetually fretful and peeviſh, crying at whatever happens to croſs his inclination, and keeping the whole family diſturbed; while his brother, perhaps, who, from unaccountable caprice, has the good fortune to be a little neglected, becomes hardy and manly, patient under diſappointments, and pleaſed with every attention that is paid to him.

There are many perſons whom a long illneſs, and the conſtant care of their relations, have reduced to the ſituation of ſpoiled children, who are put out of humour by

* Theory of Moral Sentiments.

the

the ſlighteſt trifles, are continually wearying their hearers with the diſmal catalogue of their complaints, and expect that nobody about them ſhould have any other object but to anticipate their wants.

Many individuals of the female ſex, who are, perhaps, advanced in years, or ſubject to perſonal infirmities or diſadvantages, are apt, on the other hand, to meet with ſo little attention and ſympathy as forces them to endure, in ſilence and ſolitude, many of the troubles and vexations of life, and frequently teaches them to ſubmit to their lot, not only with patience and equanimity, but with chearfulneſs and heroic reſignation. If the men have more courage, the women, undoubtedly, are diſtinguiſhed by ſuperior fortitude.

Conſidering the general effect of the progreſs of arts and civilization upon theſe virtues, it ſhould ſeem that the circumſtances of mankind, in the infancy of ſociety, are more favourable to fortitude than to courage. A ſavage, who is expoſed to many dangers, and who is obliged to undergo

undergo many hardſhips and calamities, becomes, no doubt, in ſome degree familiar with both, and is rendered conſtitutionally intrepid, as well as inſenſible to pain or uneaſineſs. But though he is not much reſtrained by the influence of fear, he is little prompted to the exertions of courage by the proſpect of procuring admiration or applauſe from his neighbours; for his neighbours are too much engroſſed by their own ſufferings to feel much for thoſe of others; while, on the other hand, his patience and conſtancy under afflictions are confirmed and ſtrengthened by the knowledge that any expreſſion of weakneſs, inſtead of obtaining the conſolation of ſympathy, would expoſe him to contempt and deriſion. Savage nations, therefore, in all parts of the world, are ſaid to be cowardly and treacherous. If they can accompliſh their end by indirect means, they never make an open attempt upon their enemies. They fight, not from the love of glory, but to gain the advantages of victory, or to gratify a vindictive ſpirit. They cover their reſentment

reſentment under the maſk of friendſhip; and never ſeem to harbour malice, till they are prepared to ſtrike.

Their heroic fortitude is univerſally known. Amid the ſevereſt tortures, they diſdain to utter a groan; and no artifice can tempt them to betray the ſecrets which they have an intereſt to conceal.

The firſt conſiderable advancement in the arts which procure ſubſiſtence, by paſturing cattle, and by cultivating the ground, has an evident tendency to improve the virtue of courage. From the greater facility of procuring the neceſſaries of life, men are collected in larger ſocieties; and by finding their own ſituation more comfortable, they have greater encouragement to indulge and cultivate their ſocial feelings. Different tribes, who happen to be in the ſame neighbourhood, are almoſt continually quarrelling and fighting; and as the members, not only of the ſame, but of oppoſite parties, become known to each other, they of courſe become rivals in their martial exploits, and by their mutual emulation acquire a high ſenſe of military honour. The Arabs, and Scythians,

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or Tartars, the ancient Gauls and Germans, the Gothic tribes who laid the foundation of the modern ſtates of Europe, are all eminent examples of the courage and martial ſpirit which the paſtoral and agricultural ages are wont to inſpire. The modern European nations carried thoſe virtues to a ſtill higher pitch: as they continued longer in that ſituation which gave full ſcope to the hoſtilities of neighbouring tribes, and felt more extenſively, among different petty ſocieties, that emulation and rivalſhip which implanted the love of military glory. Their martial ſpirit at the ſame time, acquired a peculiar direction, which introduced, among the gentry, an artificial ſtandard of merit, and fantaſtic modes of behaviour, inconſiſtent, in ſome reſpects, with the dictates of morality. The inſtitutions and cuſtoms of chivalry, which aroſe from that ſtate of things, and of which there are ſeveral veſtiges remaining at this day, I had formerly occaſion to conſider.

The improvement of commerce and manufactures, together with that opulence which flows from it, muſt be productive, it is evident, of great alterations, with reſpect

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to the virtues both of courage and fortitude. By the eſtabliſhment of regular government, a natural conſequence of civilization, mankind are protected from depredation, and thoſe nations who cultivate the arts find it their intereſt, on ordinary occaſions, to avoid mutual hoſtilities, and to maintain an amicable correſpondence. Their modes of life, therefore, which become totally different from thoſe of a rude people, give riſe to different habits. Living at eaſe, and in a ſtate of tranquillity, and engaged in the exerciſe of peaceable profeſſions, they become averſe from every enterpriſe that may expoſe them to danger, or ſubject them to pain and uneaſineſs. The more ſecure and comfortable their ſituation at home, they have the leſs inclination to exchange it, for the hazards of a campaign, or for the fatigues and hardſhips with which it may be attended.

The lively ſenſibility and exquiſite fellow-feeling which, in opulent and poliſhed nations, take place among individuals, are, at the ſame time, peculiarly unfavourable to forti-

fortitude. He who, in his diſtreſs, meets with indulgence from others, is encouraged to indulge himſelf. Inſtead of ſtruggling to repreſs the appearance of affliction, from an apprehenſion of incurring contempt or indignation, he gives way to its movements with a view of obtaining the friendly conſolation of ſympathy. Inſtead of ſmothering his feelings by an attempt to conceal them, he awakens and rouſes them by an oſtentatious diſplay of their magnitude. Thus in a poliſhed nation, people take the advice of the poet, "not to pull their hat upon their brows, but to give their ſorrow words." They become loud and clamourous in their grief; and are more deſirous of ſhewing, that they feel with delicacy and vivacity, than that they can bear their misfortunes with firmneſs and conſtancy. But it may be ſuppoſed, that the ſame lively ſenſibility and fellow-feeling, by inſpiring a nicer ſenſe of honour, will improve the virtue of courage. By a more intimate communication among the members of ſociety, the manners of mankind are ſoftened, their ſocial diſpoſitions are awakened, and they feel

feel more and more an attraction which leads them to conform their behaviour to the general ſtandard. It may be expected, therefore, that they will be ſo much the more excited to exertions which, though hazardous, will be rewarded with univerſal approbation and applauſe.

But it merits attention, that the ſtandard of approbation in this reſpect, is apt to vary from this change of ſituation. In proportion as men live in greater ſecurity, and are ſeldom employed in fighting, they are likely to lower their eſtimation of military talents, and to exalt the value of ſuch other accompliſhments as, in the ordinary ſtate of ſociety, are found more uſeful. From the cuſtoms of chivalry, indeed, introduced in a former period, certain punctilios of military honour have been tranſmitted to the preſent European nations, and are ſtill held indiſpenſibly neceſſary. Perſons of the rank and education of what are called gentlemen muſt expoſe their lives, rather than tamely ſuffer an affront. But theſe punctilios have been artificially preſerved from the force of long uſage; they are plainly contrary to the manners

manners of a commercial people, and in the more civilized parts of Europe appear to be daily losing ground. To be forward in seeking occasions to fight a duel, is now generally censured even by those who think it necessary to submit to the custom, or who admit the principles upon which it is understood to be founded.

Independent of this exception, which is restricted to persons of a particular description, and among the greater part of whom it is retained from the tyranny of old custom, the virtue of courage appears, in all the nations of modern Europe, to have declined in proportion to their advancement in commerce and manufactures. The first remarkable effect of this decline was to make the great body of the people discard the military service, and devolve the burden of national defence upon soldiers by profession, gathered promiscuously from the community at large. This practice was introduced by the earliest mercantile countries, and was gradually adopted by others, who followed in the career of commercial improvement. Though

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it was generally, we may ſuppoſe, agreeable to the ſovereign, upon whom it beſtowed the chief direction of the military force, it could not fail, for the ſame reaſon, to excite an alarm upon the part of the people, who found their liberties and rights at the diſpoſal of a ſet of mercenaries, raiſed and maintained by their chief magiſtrate. But whatever patriotic meaſures have been taken, in ſome of thoſe countries, for ſupporting a national militia, to ſerve as a counterpoiſe to the ſtanding army, the difficulty of enforcing regulations of this nature, ſo as to derive much advantage from them, muſt afford ſufficient evidence that they are adverſe to the ſpirit of the times. We may even obſerve, in the nations moſt engroſſed by trade, a tendency to employ foreign mercenaries, either by hiring to fight their battles the troops of poor ſtates, or ſubſidizing their ſovereigns, and admitting them as nominal allies.

The courage of the mercenary armies of Europe is maintained by diſcipline; that is, by habits of fighting, and by that *eſprit du corps*, which brings home to the breaſt of each

each individual a ſenſe of military honour. Art is thus made to ſupply the deficience of natural circumſtances; for men who have undertaken the trade of a ſoldier muſt be ſenſible, that perpetual diſgrace will be the puniſhment of their cowardice; and after being ſeaſoned by a campaign or two, they are commonly able, in the company of one another, to ſurmount the timidity contracted by their former way of life.

The effect of military diſcipline is probably greater or leſs, according to the advances which nations have made in civilization. The armies of a refined and poliſhed people, are likely to acquire from their profeſſion an extreme ſenſibility to martial reputation, and an enthuſiaſtic ardour to diſtinguiſh themſelves by their ſpirited atchievements. Thoſe of a nation but lately emerged from a ſtate of rudeneſs, will be more apt to poſſeſs that conſtitutional intrepidity, which enables them to remain unſhaken and immoveable in the midſt of danger, and which diſpoſes them to be contented with a bare obedience to the command of their leaders. The French armies

afford

afford a ſtriking pattern of the firſt; the Ruſſian, a good example of the ſecond. The former are animated with feelings which are calculated to intereſt us. The latter are merely a powerful inſtrument.

The decay of the military ſpirit in the modern commercial nations, has produced a correſponding degradation of the military profeſſion. Among the Romans, and other celebrated nations of antiquity, the only reputable employment ſeems to have been that of a ſoldier. The ſame ideas prevailed, and were even carried to a higher pitch, among our forefathers, in modern Europe, among them, every free man followed the profeſſion of arms, and all other profeſſions were exerciſed only by ſlaves. In France there were ſtrong veſtiges of theſe ideas, remaining at the time of the late revolution. A merchant was not a gentleman, and might, by any perſon of that rank, be affronted with impunity. A phyſician was nearly in the ſame predicament. The lawyers, or *long robe*, were in a ſort of middle ſtation, between the gentry and commonalty; as who ſhould ſay half-gentlemen.

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The glory attached to ſuperior ſkill and conduct in war, was of a piece with the exalted notions entertained of the military character. The higheſt place in the temple of fame has been commonly aſſigned to an Alexander, or a Cæſar; though the one was little more, perhaps, than a daring madman, and the other was a profligate, utterly deſtitute of principle, who deſtroyed the liberties of his country.

But commerce has at length introduced other notions of perſonal merit, and taught people to eſtimate profeſſions by a different ſcale. Dr. Swift defines a ſoldier to be "a "Yahoo, hired to kill as many of his fellow-"creatures, who have never offended him, "as he poſſibly can." This definition is, doubtleſs, looſe and declamatory. A ſoldier is underſtood to be hired for the defence of his country, and the profeſſed end of his appointment is laudable. Nor can it with reaſon be aſſerted, that the people whom he has undertaken to kill, have never offended him; for they are the enemies of his country, who, though they never injured him in particular,

particular, may be conſidered as the objects of his juſt reſentment.

But though the killing of our enemies may be vindicated from its neceſſity, it will not thence follow that the performance of this public duty is a deſirable ſervice. It is a painful taſk, barely reconcileable to ſtrict juſtice, and of which the execution is diſguſting to humanity.

It muſt, at the ſame time, be taken into conſideration, that men who engage for hire in the military profeſſion, are not permitted to call in queſtion the juſtice of thoſe wars in which they may be employed. To refuſe to obey orders, would be mutiny; and to do this in a ſervice of danger, would infer the imputation of cowardice. It is evident, however, that, in every war, the half of thoſe profeſſional men muſt be fighting in ſupport of injuſtice; for of two hoſtile nations, who have reſolved to determine their quarrel by the ſword, one only can be in the right. But it may eaſily happen that both ſhould be in the wrong. The greater part of the wars in which nations are engaged, proceed, in reality, from the fault

of both parties: they proceed from the avarice, or ambition of princes, or their miniſters, who, from motives of private intereſt, and upon falſe pretences, embroil their reſpective ſtates in frivolous and groundleſs diſputes, and ſcruple not, with unbounded profuſion, to waſte their blood and their treaſure. A mercenary army is often the blind agent of a miniſter, employed in the moſt miſchievous part of the dirty work, which he finds requiſite for the preſervation of his power.

As far as Britain has ſurpaſſed other European countries in commerce and manufactures, her inhabitants appear to have declined more conſpicuouſly in their martial diſpoſitions, and in their admiration of military talent. They are more invariably occupied, than moſt of their neighbours, in thoſe peaceable arts, which require a patient perſevering induſtry, but no exertion of courage. They are more engroſſed by gainful purſuits, which preſent a continual proſpect of accumulation, but which would be totally fruſtrated by a temporary deſertion, for the purpoſe of engaging in military operations.

tions. Above all, their ſuperior opulence tends to diſcourage any enterpriſe that is likely to be attended with danger and uncertainty. "Let him go fight," ſays the ſoldier of Lucullus, "who has loſt his purſe." The man who is poor is incited to deſperate adventures by the conſideration that he has much to gain, and little or nothing to loſe. He who is rich is in the oppoſite circumſtances. The fall from his preſent fortune to beggary would occaſion more miſery, than the riſe to any fortune which he can expect to acquire would add to his happineſs. Common prudence, therefore ſeems to require, that he ſhould hazard nothing, that he ſhould be cautious in retaining an exiſtence which admits of ſo many comforts, and be careful to preſerve that brittle thread of life, upon which all his enjoyments depend.

In examining how far theſe peculiar circumſtances have rendered the inhabitants of this iſland leſs warlike than their neighbours, there is no queſtion concerning our fleets and armies. The valour and ſteadineſs of mercenary troops depends upon their diſcipline; at leaſt a great ſuperiority in this

reſpect will overcome every diſadvantage; and a deficiency can not be counterbalanced by any favourable circumſtance. It was by ſuperior diſcipline that the armies of the great Pruſſian monarch became the beſt in the world. The Britiſh ſailors, from circumſtances which produce a better diſcipline with regard to the conduct of naval affairs, are an over-match, with exception, perhaps, of the Dutch, for thoſe of any other country; and if the armies of Britain are not equal, in every reſpect, to ſome of thoſe upon the Continent; it is partly owing to the ſituation and manners of their countrymen, which are leſs favourable to *military purſuits;* and partly to the impediments under which their officers lie, in acquiring a ſcientific knowledge oft heir profeſſion.

Neither is there any queſtion concerning that claſs of perſons who are ſuppoſed to be under the neceſſity of maintaining what are called the punctilios of honour at the hazard of their lives. The character of a gentleman, whether in Britain, or in any other civilized country of Europe, is underſtood, in this reſpect, to be nearly the ſame,

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being formed according to a general ſtandard, with which, however whimſical, every individual of that rank is obliged to comply. The courage of the people of this deſcription depends upon a ſpecies of diſcipline, different from that which is exerciſed over the military profeſſion, but neither leſs rigid, nor enforced by puniſhments leſs efficacious.

But excluſive of thoſe two claſſes, the mercenary forces, and perſons who by their education and rank are ſtill ſubjected, in ſome degree, to the old artificial cuſtoms of chivalry, the great body of the people ſeem to be removed at an extreme diſtance from all military ideas. They hold the military profeſſion in the loweſt eſtimation. When the ſon of a tradeſman enliſts in the army, he is looked upon as a profligate who has been deluded to his ruin; and if he cannot be bought off, he is given up for loſt. Even among the gentry, unleſs where ſome of the ſons ſhew an early predilection for a military life, thoſe who appear the leaſt qualified to riſe by other profeſſions are commonly deſtined to ſerve in the army or navy.

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Though the mercantile towns in England are much addicted to mobbing, a conſequence of their independent circumſtances, their mobs are, in moſt caſes, eaſily quelled by an inſignificant body of troops. Thus the bill for extending the privileges of the Roman Catholics, excited a prodigious fury in London and throughout the whole country; but notwithſtanding the enthuſiaſm, with which the populace were actuated in oppoſing that meaſure, they were eaſily intimidated, and, by a mere handful of troops reduced to ſubmiſſion: whereas in Scotland, a poorer and a ruder country, the people perſiſted in their oppoſition, and obliged the miniſter, tho igh he ſhewed a good deal of reluctance, to abandon his bill.

In the year 1745, a body of Scottiſh rebels, perfectly undiſciplined, and ill-armed, whoſe numbers did not exceed four or five thouſand, marched over a conſiderable part of England, and, though the country was warmly attached to the houſe of Hanover, met with no body of men who ventured to oppoſe them, until the army, which had then been employed in Flanders, was brought home

home for that purpoſe. The people of England, though they knew that their religion and liberties were at ſtake, did not think proper, on that occaſion, to ſhew themſelves in the field; imitating the example of that helpleſs and timid animal which, upon the leaſt approach of external violence, ſhrinks within its ſhell, and cannot be drawn from that aſylum until the danger is removed.

How often have we ſeen a great majority of the Engliſh nation, fired with indignation at the conduct of adminiſtration, loud and clamorous in their complaints, waving the banner of *magna charta* in the face of the miniſter, and availing themſelves of the liberty of the preſs to annoy him on every ſide; when by a little ſteady reſolution, by the diſplay of a little timely ſeverity, by a judicious application of the machine of government, *pulveres exigui jactu*, they have been completely ſubdued, and rendered perfectly ſubmiſſive?

It is unneceſſary to remark that this timidity inſpired by overgrown wealth, which

which renders a rich trading nation vulnerable through the whole of their poſſeſſions and makes them feel an agonizing ſenſibility to whatever dangers may affect even one ſhilling of their property, is of great utility in counteracting the exceſſes of an independent ſpirit, by ſtrengthening the bands of public authority. The wealth of each individual is a pledge for his quiet and orderly behaviour. It may, doubtleſs, on the other hand, encourage an ambitious monarch to overturn the liberties of his country. But there is ground to expect, that this timidity will not operate beyond certain limits. If the oppreſſion of government ſhould be carried ſo far as to aim at the deſtruction of property, the mercantile people would, probably, be the firſt to burſt the bands of fear, and be actuated by a deſperate valour in defence of thoſe objects to which they are ſo immoderately attached. The effect of great commercial opulence, therefore, is to produce caution and long-ſuffering under the hand of power, but to enſure ultimately a vigorous oppoſition to ſuch acts of tyranny

as

, are manifeſtly ſubverſive of the fundamental rights of mankind. This, in reality, ſeems to point at the due medium of that ſubmiſſion which men owe to their political governors: for nothing is more inconſiſtent with the happineſs of ſociety, than the frequent recurrence of the people to reſiſtance upon ſlight and trivial grievances; and when there is a real neceſſity to reſiſt the uſurpation of the ſovereign, he commonly pulls off the maſk in ſufficient time to give warning to his ſubjects, that they may be fully juſtified for uniting in defence of their privileges.

Section II.

Of Sobriety and Temperance.

The motives by which men are excited to action may be reduced to two claſſes: the deſire of obtaining what is pleaſant or agreeable, and that of avoiding what is painful or diſagreeable. By the conſtitution of our nature, a pleaſure that is near makes a ſtronger impreſſion upon us than one

one that is diſtant; whence it frequently happens, that we become unable to eſtimate properly thoſe different objects; and by yielding to a preſent or immediate enjoyment, we ſacrifice a future happineſs of greater importance.

The virtue of temperance conſiſts in correcting this vicious tendency, by balancing our ſeveral enjoyments, and by never allowing an inferior to uſurp the place of a ſuperior pleaſure. Fortitude, which has already been conſidered, exerciſes a ſelf-command of another kind, by holding a ſimilar balance between painful or diſagreeable objects.

The moſt violent appetites which often produce the greateſt irregularity and inconſiſtency of conduct, are thoſe of hunger and thirſt, and thoſe which relate to the intercourſe of the ſexes. The virtue of temperance therefore is chiefly employed in reſtraining the exceſſes of thoſe two natural propenſities.

The appetite for food, it is evident, will aſſume a different aſpect in every country and its gratification will be variouſly modified,

hard, according as the inhabitants experience a greater plenty or ſcarcity of proviſions. Very poor and rude nations, who have collected no regular fund for ſubſiſtence, but depend upon their daily exertions for ſupplying the calls of nature, are often expoſed to the extremities of hunger, and when by good fortune they obtain a plentiful repaſt, are apt to indulge in the exceſſes of gluttony. Man, in this miſerable ſtate, appears to reſemble thoſe voracious brute animals who are fitted to endure a long abſtinence, and who, by gormandizing ſometimes deſtroy their vital functions.

The arts which enabled men to accumulate a ſtock of proviſions, render them of courſe careful and provident of the future. Having been expoſed to the pain of hunger, they endeavour to guard againſt that calamity; and the moſt obvious reflection will teach them to ſtore up the food which they have no immediate occaſion to uſe. The diſpoſition to hoard grows upon them by favourable circumſtances, and inſpires not only anxiety to acquire, but reluctance to conſume. From the ſlow and gradual pro-

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greſs of thoſe improvements which tend to multiply and accumulate the neceſſaries of life, the purſuits of mankind are principally directed to the acquiſition of daily food, and the want of this continues for a long time to be the chief object of their apprehenſions. Frugality, therefore, and even parſimony, in this article, are in early ages conſidered as indiſpenſible qualities, and profuſion as an odious vice. In thoſe European nations who have made conſiderable advances in opulence, we ſtill find evident veſtiges of this primitive way of thinking. To caſt away any thing that contributes to the ſubſiſtence of man is regarded with ſuperſtitious abhorrence, as tending to provoke the reſentment of Providence, "You know not what "you may come to," is the reproach which an act of this kind commonly excites among the populace in Scotland. To have a ſmall appetite was regarded as a recommendation. "You eat nothing—one would not know what you live upon," were the old-faſhioned compliments by which the miſtreſs of the houſe was accuſtomed to flatter her gueſts.

"Our

" Our fathers praiſed rank veniſon, you ſuppoſe,
" Perhaps, young man! our fathers had no noſe,
" Not ſo; a buck was then a week's repaſt;
" And 'twas their point, I ween, to make it laſt;
" More pleaſed to keep it till their friends ſhould come,
" Than eat the ſweeteſt by themſelves at home.
" Why had not I in thoſe good times my birth,
" 'Ere coxcomb pies, or coxcombs were on earth?"

From the diffuſion of wealth by commerce and manufactures, there has ariſen in ſome countries, ſuch a regular and plentiful ſupply of proviſions as among people in the higher and even middling ranks, to baniſh the idea of ſcarcity, and to produce, in this reſpect, a total change of manners. What was formerly a mere neceſſary expence is now converted into a matter of refinement; and the relief of hunger is loſt in the enjoyments of the table. Upon the gratification of the palate, upon the natural hilarity inſpired by good cheer, are ingrafted the pleaſures of ſocial intercourſe; and both corporeal and mental faculties are expected to contribute their ſhare towards an elegant entertainment. As this entertainment is level to every capacity; as it takes hold of propenſities which are very

very univerſal, and which from the time conſumed in their indulgence, are greatly ſtrengthened by the power of habit: as by exhibiting an appearance of wealth, it becomes in many caſes a great ſource of oſtentation and vanity; we need not wonder that it ſhould ſometimes run into prodigious exceſs, that it ſhould frequently encroach upon the important buſineſs and attentions of mankind, and that it ſhould prove hurtful and even ruinous to the fortunes of many individuals.

By the bountiful diſpoſition of nature, the removal of the painful ſenſation of thirſt is, in moſt countries and ſituations, attended with no labour or trouble. But here in the rudeſt forms of ſociety, mankind have generally introduced a ſpecies of luxury; ſome artificial beverage, to relieve the inſipidity of ſimple water, or rather to obtain the exhilarating effect of intoxication. Some invention for this purpoſe appears to have taken place in almoſt every age and country. The poor ſavage, upon whoſe mind there are few traces of thought beyond what ariſe from the few objects which impreſs his external ſenſes, and

and who, if not roused to exertion for the relief of his wants, passes many a tiresome melancholy hour, flies with avidity to this terrestrial nectar, which creates a new world before his eyes, makes all nature smile and dance around him, and at length steeps his senses in a grateful oblivion of his miserable existence. Our European merchants who traffic in the human species, know sufficiently the effect of this powerful charm, to conquer his affections, or to drown his feelings of humanity; and they scruple not to take advantage of his weakness, by purchasing his wife or his child for a bottle or two of spirituous liquor, or by exciting him for a bribe of the same kind, to kidnap his neighbours, or to join in bloody wars which may give rise to a plentiful harvest of prisoners.

When the use of intoxicating liquors has grown up, and been spread over a country, it is not easily eradicated. The vice of drunkenness, which is universally prevalent among barbarians, is not quickly banished, though in the progress of civilization it may be somewhat modified and restrained. Among the higher ranks, even in countries far

far advanced in the arts, the bottle continues to be the great enlivener of converſation, the ſource of gaiety and pleaſantry, which, if it does not always produce true wit, never fails to ſoften criticiſm, and while it blunts the faculties of the ſpeaker, it augments in a greater proportion, the indulgence and facile applauſe of the company. The ſame happy inſtrument of ſocial mirth beſtows upon our failings the garb and aſpect of virtue, by inſpiring the glow of kindneſs and affection, by improving the ordinary companion into the boſom friend, and by opening the heart to the overflowings of generoſity and benevolence.

We cannot, however, expect that the mirth which riſes from the enchanted cup will be always the moſt refined or poliſhed; or that it will not exceed the bounds of decency and decorum. The ſame blind and head-ſtrong power which exalts the ſoul, without the guidance of reaſon, to ſudden friendſhips and attachments, will alſo, without cauſe, provoke and irritate the ſelf-important, the reſentful, and diſcordant paſſions. The modeſt Graces wing their

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flight from the revels of Bacchus, and are ſucceeded by looſe riot and diſorder, by rude and boiſterous diſputes, and by groundleſs and unmeaning, though ſometimes fatal quarrels.

To the lower orders of the community, to the labouring poor, the deluſive poiſon of intoxication is productive of conſequences far more pernicious. It affords, indeed, a healing balſam to their toils and cares; and our fellow-feelings muſt reclaim againſt that rigid ſeverity which would altogether deny this conſolation to a claſs of men, by whoſe painful exertions the proſperity of every ſtate is principally ſupported, and the reſt of the ſociety maintained in eaſe and affluence. But their exceſſes in this particular are ſo pregnant with miſchief, ſo deſtructive of all induſtry and domeſtic attention, and lead ſo directly to complete diſſipation, and ſhameleſs profligacy, that ſobriety, or temperance in the uſe of intoxicating liquors, has been juſtly regarded as the leading virtue of the populace, and the contrary, if not the moſt inexcuſable vice, at leaſt the great inlet to every ſort of immorality.

It has been commonly thought that the propenſity to ſtrong liquors ariſes from phyſical cauſes; and that it is peculiarly prevalent in cold climates. It is probable that the manners of the people in the northern parts of Europe have given riſe to this opinion. But it ought to be remembered, that the ſame people, from the nature of the ſoil, and from the temperature of the weather, lie under great diſadvantages with reſpect to agriculture and the common arts of life, and have therefore long remained in a ſituation which is favourable to this propenſity. As in countries which are expoſed to the extremities of cold, the ſavage life muſt be the more bitter and uncomfortable, it ſeems, on that account, to ſtand more in need of the friendly aid of intoxication; and as the progreſs of improvement in thoſe countries muſt be ſlower and more difficult, ſo the cuſtom of hard drinking will, in proportion as it has remained longer, be ſo much the more confirmed.

There is, however, from the hiſtory of the world, no ground to believe that the vice

vice of drunkenneſs is peculiar to cold climates. The ancient Greeks, though living in the ſouthern part of Europe, appear to have been great drinkers. The ſame circumſtance is mentioned as characteriſtic of the Gauls. It appears that the modern inhabitants of Spain were formerly diſtinguiſhed by a ſimilar character; for, in the agreeable novel of Gil Blas, ſo highly celebrated for its pictures of real manners, the fine gentlemen of Madrid are deſcribed as paſſing the whole night in hard drinking, and as reeling home to bed late in the morning, in the very ſtyle which is faſhionable in the moſt drunken parts of Europe. It is true, the author has hinted in his preface, that though the ſcene of his work is laid in Spain, there are frequent alluſions to the manners of his own countrymen; but whether we conſider this feature as belonging to the Spaniards or the French, it ſerves equally to prove that even in modern times, the vice of drunkenneſs has not been confined to the northern part of Europe.

The ancient inhabitants of Perſia, a ſtill warmer country, were notorious drunkards,

inſomuch that Alexander, a man of univerſal ambition, could not think to be out-done in this reſpect by a people whom he had conquered in arms*. It is hardly neceſſary to add, that the uſe of opium among the Turks, who are forbid by their religion to drink wine, anſwers the ſame purpoſe, and has been introduced upon the ſame principle, with the fermented and diſtilled liquors of Europe.

But though debauchery in drinking may for a long time maintain its ground in thoſe countries where it has once been firmly rooted, we have reaſon to expect that after a certain pitch of improvement in arts and ſciences, it will be expelled from every country. The advancement of knowledge contributes, at leaſt in the higher and middling ranks of life, to ſupply a fund of ideas, productive of continual amuſement, and proves a powerful antidote to melancholy or dejection. To people who are

* Darius's Epitaph on himſelf—"That he was a great "conquerer and a great drinker." See the facts collected on this ſubject by Mr. Hume. "Eſſay of Nat. Characters."

provided

provided with conſtant reſources for entertainment from the powers of imagination and reflection, the aid of intoxication is not neceſſary to exalt their ſpirits, or to enliven converſation. From the advancement of taſte, they are diſguſted with that coarſe mirth which is the effect of ſtrong liquors, and with that ferment of delirious joy, which is commonly requited by a ſubſequent mental depreſſion and bodily indiſpoſition. If they call in a cheerful glaſs, they are not tempted to ſuch a degree of exceſs as will diſturb the feaſt of reaſon, or interrupt the flow of elegant pleaſantry. In a word, the uſe of the bottle is rendered ſubordinate to the correct enjoyment of ſocial intercourſe and becomes merely a branch of that good cheer which conſtitutes the moſt learned luxury of the table.

Theſe obſervations may be illuſtrated by the change of manners which, in later times, have taken place in Britain and the countries connected with it. In England the cuſtom of hard drinking among people of the better ſort, is in a great meaſure exploded. The inhabitants of Scotland, though

though they ſtill lie under a bad character in point of ſobriety, appear to be rapidly following the footſteps of their ſouthern neighbours, in this as well as in other improvements. If the inhabitants of Ireland diſcover, in this reſpect, a greater attachment to the ancient uſuage, it is becauſe the arts in general have made leſs progreſs in that country. Though the populace, in any of theſe countries, are doubtleſs more invariably under the dominion of thoſe propenſities which lead to intoxication, there is ground to hope that from increaſing habits of induſtry and frugality, and from the prevailing faſhion among their ſuperiors, they will be more and more diſpoſed to correct a vicious indulgence, which they find ſo prejudicial to their intereſt.

With regard to the intercourſe of the ſexes, the virtue of temperance may be conſidered in three different aſpects. The firſt is exhibited in early and rude nations.

The inſtinct which leads to the propagation of the ſpecies, is leſs neceſſary than the appetite for food, which is directed to the preſervation of the individual. The former

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is more affected by education than the latter, and according to the habits acquired in different ſituations, puts on a greater variety of aſpects. The demands of hunger require a conſtant and regular ſupply, while thoſe of the ſexual appetite occur only at intervals, and are excluded by numberleſs wants and cares of greater importance. The former is equally an object of attention in all ages and countries; but the latter muſt be in great meaſure overlooked in that miſerable ſtate of ſociety where men have made no proviſion for ſubſiſtence, and are engaged in continual ſtruggles for procuring the bare neceſſaries of life.

It is obſerved, that the greater part of animals, who have much difficulty in procuring their food, which is remarkably the caſe of all the carnivorous, are reſtricted in the intercourſe of the ſexes to particular ſeaſons; and it is probable that in the human ſpecies, when they ſubſiſt principally by hunting and fiſhing, the propenſities of nature are uſually ſo feeble as to be conſiſtent with ſimilar reſtrictions.

Even

Even at this early period, however, ſome kind of marriage, or permanent union between perſons of different ſexes, for the purpoſe of rearing and maintaining their children, has generally taken place. That natural affection which is implanted not only in all mankind, but in the more ſagacious of the brute animals, diſpoſes the parents univerſally to co-operate in maintaining their offspring. In the brute creation, indeed, the union ariſing from that circumſtance is commonly of ſhort duration; becauſe the young animal, ſoon after the birth, is in a condition to provide for its own ſubſiſtence. But the offspring of the human ſpecies remains, for ſo long a period, in a ſtate of perfect imbecillity, that the parents, in the natural courſe of things, are likely to have propagated ſeveral children before their protection and care of the firſt can be diſpenſed with. Their connection, therefore, from the ſame circumſtance which gave riſe to it is prolonged, not only while the mother is capable of child-bearing, but until the youngeſt child is able to maintain itſelf;

itſelf; and the habits which they acquire by living ſo long in the ſame family, in the company of each other and of their children, muſt render it agreeable, and in moſt caſes expedient, that their union ſhould be continued for the reſt of their life.

Thus the ſociety produced by marriage, though doubtleſs, originating in a blind propenſity, is promoted and ſupported by feelings of a ſuperior order. The conjugal, the parental, and filial relations give riſe to various modifications of mutual ſympathy and benevolence, which, in their range are not the moſt extenſive, but which operating in a ſphere adapted to the limited capacities of the human heart, are exerted in ſuch directions as are moſt conducive to the great purpoſes of human nature. The good which we can do to mankind at large is commonly inconſiderable; but the benefits which may reſult from our acting with propriety in the exerciſe of domeſtic affections, are above all calculation.

In this early ſtate of ſociety, the manners of mankind, with relation to the intercourſe of the ſexes, are uſually removed at the greateſt

greateſt diſtance from intemperance. The propenſity or inſtinct which leads to the continuance of the ſpecies is commonly no more than ſufficient to anſwer the purpoſe for which it is implanted in all mankind. In very rude ages, people are ſo far from being addicted to exceſs in its indulgence, that upon the ſlighteſt degree of refinement in this particular, they become aſhamed of its ordinary gratifications. In many barbarous tribes it is a punctilio of decorum that the huſband and wife ſhould cohabit by ſtealth; and if among ſuch people, correct notions of chaſtity are in a great meaſure unknown, this proceeds not from habits of debauchery, but from ignorance of thoſe principles which recommend perſonal fidelity to an individual. It may, at the ſame time, be remarked, that although the conjugal affection, when joined to the love of offſpring, has been capable, at an early period, of cementing families, and thus laying the foundation of political ſociety, it is not of itſelf ſufficient in thoſe times, to give much conſideration and dignity to the wife, or even to prevent her, in conſequence of her

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inferiority in ſtrength and courage, from becoming the ſervant or ſlave of the huſband.

The ſecond aſpect of ſociety to which I alluded, is that which ariſes from the advancement of the uſeful arts, from the conſequent acquiſition and extenſion of property, and from the progreſs of civil government.

The advancement of a people in the various arts, which procure the progreſſive accommodations and conveniencies of life, and the accumulation of property in different proportions by individuals, muſt affect the intercourſe of the ſexes in two different ways. In the firſt place, when men are placed in a ſituation which relieves them from the preſſure of immediate want, and ſupplies them with abundance of whatever is neceſſary to ſubſiſtence, their attention is, of courſe, directed to other leſs important gratifications; they obey the ſuggeſtions of nature by indulging their various propenſities, and become, from the influence of habit, more and more addicted to pleaſure. The different degrees of wealth, on the

the other hand, which ariſe from the talents or the fortune of individuals, give riſe to ſuch differences of rank and condition, as remove different families to a diſtance from each other, inflame and ſwell them with family pride and jealouſy, and, from an apprehenſion of unſuitable and degrading alliances, renders them averſe from that familiarity and freedom of intercourſe which might be attended either with licentious indulgence, or with haſty and inconſiderate matrimonial connections.

The indiſcriminate gratification of the propenſity between the ſexes is further obſtructed by the general improvements of ſociety. From a gradual refinement of taſte and manners, there is produced a nicer ſelection of objects, and a ſtronger preference of thoſe individuals, by whoſe beauty, or other perſonal qualities, our deſires have been peculiarly exerted. But the ſame circumſtances, which create more diverſity of taſte, will tend more frequently to prevent a reciprocity of inclination, and conſequently, will often render it more difficult

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for the lover to attain the object of his wiſhes.

The reſtraints which are thus laid upon the ſexual correſpondence, contribute, in a high degree, to improve and augment the pleaſures which reſult from it. The difficulties, the delays, the diſappointments, which we experience in purſuit of a favourite gratification, cannot fail to enhance its value, by fixing our attention for a length of time upon the ſame object, by diſpoſing us to eſtimate the attainment in proportion to the diſtreſs which we feel from the want of it, and by rouſing the imagination to paint every circumſtance in ſuch colours as may flatter our prevailing inclinations. Theſe are the great expedients of nature, which give riſe to peculiar attachments, and by which a ſimple deſire or appetite is often converted into a violent paſſion.

The effects of mere facility in procuring ſubſiſtence, while no difficulties occur in the indulgence of the ſexual propenſities, may be illuſtrated by the manners which prevail in Otaheite and thoſe neighbouring iſlands in the South Sea, with which Euro-

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pean travellers have lately made us acquainted. Thoſe people, from their ſingularly happy climate, are without induſtry or labour, poſſeſſed of all the neceſſaries of life. As they have, at the ſame time, accumulated little or no wealth, they are, in a great meaſure, ſtrangers to thoſe diſtinctions of rank which divide and ſeparate the inhabitants of civilized countries; and, as they have never been rouſed to active exertions, either of body or mind, they are unacquainted with thoſe refinements of taſte and manners which ariſe from the cultivation of the arts. Living, therefore, in conſtant eaſe and idleneſs, they are ſtrongly addicted to ſenſual pleaſure; but they are debauched without paſſion, and voluptuous without elegance, or even diſcrimination of objects.

The effect of uncommon reſtraints upon the intercourſe of the ſexes may, on the other hand, be obſerved in the manners of thoſe Gothic nations, who over-ran and ſubdued the weſtern provinces of the Roman empire. Thoſe nations, acquiring large poſſeſſions by their conqueſt, and ſpreading themſelves over an extenſive territory, were formed

formed into a multitude of ſeparate baronies, under the authority of a ſovereign, but ſo independent, and ſo feebly united, as to be under little reſtraint in the exerciſe of mutual hoſtilities and depredations. By theſe peculiar circumſtances, which remained for ſeveral centuries, neighbouring families contracted ſuch animoſities, and entertained ſuch apprehenſion and jealouſy of each other, as became an inſuperable bar to their intimate correſpondence, and therefore interrupted, in proportion, the communication of the ſexes. To this interruption we may aſcribe the romantic love, the uncommon purity and delicacy of ſentiment, which appear ſo conſpicuouſly in the manners of that period, and of which there are ſtill very evident and remarkable traces in the turn of thinking, the uſages, and the literature of the preſent European nations.

The ordinary ſtate of civilized ſociety exhibits a medium between thoſe two extremes; with neither the voluptuouſneſs of the former, nor the fantaſtic love and admiration of the latter; but with a moderate ſenſibility to pleaſure, derived from the advance-

advancement of taſte, and with a degree of paſſion excited by the uſual impediments to gratification. Upon the firſt conſiderable advances of commerce and the arts, the ſituation of mankind is rendered ſo eaſy and comfortable, as diſpoſes them commonly to enter into marriage whenever they arrive at that period of life which fits them for the diſcharge of its duties; and in forming this connection, they muſt frequently, from differences of rank or perſonal qualities, or from accidental circumſtances, meet with various obſtacles to the attainment of their wiſhes, and be engaged in a long courtſhip, which, by inflaming their deſires, and fixing their imagination upon the ſame object, is likely to create a ſincere and laſting attachment; an attachment, upon which all the domeſtic virtues are eaſily engrafted, and which is capable of rendering all the cares of the marriage ſtate light and agreeable. The ardour of a blind appetite is thus controuled by feelings of a ſuperior order; and the paſſion of love becomes the guardian of temperance.

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The high cultivation of the elegant arts, and the introduction of immoderate opulence, give riſe to a third variety, by which, in relation to the preſent ſubject, the manners of ſociety require to be diſtinguiſhed.

Luxury and expenſive living are the natural attendants of great wealth. Excited by mutual emulation, individuals, in proportion to their riches, endeavour more and more to ſurpaſs one another in elegance and magnificence, and in ſupplying thoſe wants by which, from faſhionable extravagance, they are continually ſolicited, muſt find at length that their income, however large, is inadequate to their demands. They become, of conſequence, unwilling to take upon them the additional burden of maintaining a family. While the men, by whoſe courage and ſuperior exertions property is, in a great meaſure engroſſed, are thus generally diſpoſed to remain in the ſtate of bachelors, a proportional part of the other ſex are laid under the neceſſity of remaining unmarried; and both, from the operation of the ſame cauſes, contract, unavoid-

ably, ſuch habits as tend to diſqualify them from enjoying happineſs in the married ſtate. It may, at the ſame time, be expected that perſons, who, notwithſtanding theſe diſcouragements, are induced to form a matrimonial connection, will endeavour to compenſate the inconveniences attending it, by regarding the fortune more than the perſonal attractions of their yoke-mates. From ſuch a mercenary traffic, it would be vain to look for that harmony which is requiſite to promote the welfare of the family. To ſuch marriages may be applied the maxim of the civil law: *Societas eſt mater diſcordiarum.*

Theſe obſervations are illuſtrated by the manners of ancient Rome about the beginning of her deſpotical government. The great wealth imported from the conquered provinces had then given riſe to ſuch a degree of luxury and expenſive living as proved extremely unfavourable to marriage, and induced the Emperor Auguſtus to encourage that union, by various taxes and penalties upon celibacy, and by beſtowing ſuitable premiums upon married people,

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and upon thoſe who had produced a number of children. The ſame circumſtance introduced the avowed and very univerſal practice, among wealthy and unmarried perſons, of keeping a concubine, whoſe children, being of inferior rank, were maintained at leſs expence, but who, in other reſpects, was viewed in a light ſomewhat ſimilar to that of a wife.

So mercenary were the Romans in their matrimonial alliances, that a woman who brought no dower to her huſband, was conſidered in a diſgraceful ſituation; and unleſs there appeared good evidence of her marriage, ſhe was held to be, not a wife, but a concubine.

The ſame circumſtances which render marriage inconvenient and burdenſome, in regard to pecuniary intereſt, are no leſs unfavourable to that connection from the general progreſs of diſſipation and voluptuouſneſs.

Among nations poſſeſſed of moderate wealth, who are chiefly occupied in the cultivation of the uſeful arts, the inhabitants are, for the moſt part, engaged in

ſerious employments, by which they are ſeparated into various departments, and prevented from holding an extenſive communication. The members of neighbouring families, the ſeveral knots of kindred and acquaintance, whom accidents, or the tranſactions of buſineſs, have collected in ſmall circles, are accuſtomed to keep company with one another, but little intercourſe is held with ſtrangers. Among perſons of different ſexes, living in this retired ſituation, the imagination will frequently be led to form a reciprocal and permanent attachment. But the advancement of a people in thoſe arts which are ſubſervient to pleaſure and amuſement, occaſions a more extenſive correſpondence among the different members of ſociety. Almoſt all men of fortune, and of liberal education, whoſe reſidence admits of their intercourſe, become acquainted with each other, and frequently aſſemble in all the faſhionable meetings of pleaſure and amuſement. The more opulent they become, and the more poliſhed in their manners, theſe meetings become the more numerous; and the communication

munication among people of rank and condition is, in proportion, extended and diverſified. In theſe polite circles, the women claim an equal ſhare with the other ſex, and by their agreeable accompliſhments, by their delicacy and vivacity, as well as by their perſonal charms, contribute no leſs to the entertainment.

The unreſerved and extenſive intercourſe of the two ſexes has, doubtleſs, a tendency to divide the attention among a great variety of objects, to efface the impreſſion of one object by that of another; and, conſequently, to prevent a ſtrong or laſting attachment to any individual. The ſenſibility of the heart is thus gradually worn out and exhauſted by continual diſſipation; and the paſſion, which formerly excited all the tender affections, is at length converted into a mere vehicle of ſenſual enjoyment. A ſpirit of gallantry and intrigue, totally inconſiſtent with the duties of domeſtic ſociety, is of courſe introduced in the higher ranks; to whom it affords that occupation and amuſement which their inferiors derive from the purſuits of induſtry. In the natural courſe

courſe of things, the diſſipated manners of the rich are, by the force of example, communicated to the lower orders, among whom they loſe that appearance of refinement in which they were enveloped, and appear in the undiſguiſed form of groſs debauchery and common proſtitution.

This progreſs of diſſipation and voluptuouſneſs may be obſerved in all countries where the people have made great advances in the accumulation of wealth, and in the arts which adminiſter to luxury and extravagance. In ancient Rome, in the great Aſiatic nations, in modern Italy, France, and England, a diſſoluteneſs of manners, in relation to the intercourſe of the ſexes, appears to have been the inſeparable attendant of great opulence; though from peculiar circumſtances in theſe different countries, it has been exhibited under various modifications.

The ancient Romans paſſed very ſuddenly from poverty and barbariſm to immoderate wealth and luxury; and, between theſe two extremes, there ſeems to have paſſed no interval which was calculated to refine and exalt

exalt the paſſion between the ſexes. When they advanced, therefore, into the latter ſituation, about the end of the commonwealth, they had acquired no previous habits, to prevent them from ſinking at once into a degree of ſenſuality, and groſs debauchery, of which there is no example. Among them, the ſhameleſs profligacy of a Meſſalina, was underſtood to exhibit the behaviour of a woman of rank, immoderately addicted to the purſuits of gallantry and pleaſure.

In the preſent opulent nations of Europe, the veſtiges which remain of the refined ſentiments of a former period, have produced in the higher ranks, a more elegant ſpecies of licentiouſneſs; at the ſame time that the Chriſtian religion, by exalting the merit of reſtraint, and even of total abſtinence, in relation to the ſexual correſpondence, has contributed, no doubt, to retard a general relaxation of manners. In particular, the authority of the church, which was exerted to render marriage an indiſſoluble tie, has prevented parents, in many caſes, from being led by caprice, or bad humour, to form

form ſuch connections as were incompatible with the intereſt of their children. The regulations to this effect have not, indeed, entirely maintained their ground, in oppoſition to the ſpirit of the later age. In ſome parts of Europe they have been ſubjected to limitations; in others they have been evaded; in France they have been wholly repealed.

In the great eaſtern nations, the practice of polygamy, though calculated to promote, in the one ſex, an unlimited indulgence in ſenſual pleaſure, is equally adverſe, on the one hand, to groſs proſtitution; and, on the other, to the refinements of ſentimental paſſion. The harams and ſeraglios of the eaſt are ſaid to exhibit an aſſemblage of beauty in the utmoſt variety of elegant forms; but they leave their indolent maſter nothing to deſire except the capacity of enjoyment.

Some benevolent philoſophers have indulged the pleaſing ſpeculation, that the faculties and virtues of mankind are univerſally improved by the progreſs of the arts and ſciences; and that human nature, by culture

culture and education, is led to endleſs degrees of perfection. To this flattering, and perhaps generally well-founded hypotheſis, the circumſtance now ſuggeſted appears to form a remarkable exception. Nothing can be more inconſiſtent with the finer feelings of the heart; nothing more incompatible with the order of ſociety; nothing more deſtructive of thoſe bands which unite men together, and enable them to live in mutual confidence and ſecurity, than debauchery and diſſolute manners. The indiſcriminate voluptuouſneſs of the one ſex cannot fail to produce a ſtill greater depravity of the other, by annihilating the female point of honour, and introducing univerſal proſtitution. The rank of the women is thus degraded; marriage becomes hardly the ſource of a peculiar connection; and the unhappy child who is born in a family, inſtead of reaping advantage from the natural prepoſſeſſions and affections of its parents, is doomed to ſuffer the fatal conſequences of their jealouſy and diſcord. The effect of their negligence, in ſuch a ſituation,

ſituation, may eaſily be conceived, when we conſider the hard fortune which is commonly experienced by the iſſue of an illegitimate correſpondence.

Nature has wiſely provided, that the education and even the maintenance of the human offspring, ſhould not depend upon general philanthropy or benevolence, deduced from abſtracted philoſophical principles; but upon peculiar paſſions and feelings, which have a more powerful and immediate influence on the conduct of mankind: and, when theſe paſſions are weakened, theſe feelings deſtroyed, we ſhall in vain expect their place to be ſupplied by general views of utility to mankind, or particular interpoſitions of the legiſlature.

SECTION III.

Of Juſtice and Generoſity.

THE virtues and vices of mankind relate more immediately, either to the intereſt of the agent himſelf or to the intereſt of others. Of the former claſs are thoſe which have been already conſidered. The latter may deſerve a ſeparate examination.

When our actions tend to promote the happineſs of our neighbours, or when they have a contrary tendency, it may frequently happen, that, while every ſpectator approves or diſapproves of our conduct in theſe different caſes, yet no perſon imagines we could, with propriety, be compelled to act in the one way, or to abſtain from acting in the other. To requite a favour with gratitude, to hazard our fortune in behalf of a friend, to relieve the diſtreſs of thoſe with whom we have no particular connection, are actions of this nature. There are many caſes, on the other hand, where our behaviour in relation to our neighbours becomes a matter

a matter of ſtrict obligation, and where we may be compelled to follow one courſe of action, and puniſhed for the contrary. Thus we may be forced to fulfil our promiſes, and to abſtain from doing hurt to others. Actions of the latter ſort belong to what, in a ſtrict ſenſe, are called the rules of juſtice. Thoſe of the former belong to generoſity or benevolence.

That the advancement of arts, manufactures, and commerce, has a tendency to improve the virtue of juſtice in all its branches, appears indiſputable.

Mankind are induced to abſtain from injuſtice by the feelings of humanity, which diſpoſe them to avoid hurting their neighbours, as well as by the conſideration that ſuch a conduct will be highly conducive to their own intereſt; and both of theſe principles operate with peculiar force from the circumſtances in which a commercial people is placed. By commerce and manufactures, the contracts and tranſactions of a country are multiplied almoſt without end; and the poſſeſſions of individuals are extended and varied in proportion; whence the injuries

ariſing

ariſing from the breach of promiſe, from diſhoneſty and fraud, or from any violation of property, are more ſenſibly felt, and productive of more ſympathy and regret. The advantages, at the ſame time, which every individual derives from a ſtrict obſervance of the rules of juſtice, become alſo proportionably greater and more manifeſt. According as the intercourſe of ſociety is extended, it requires more and more a mutual truſt and confidence, which cannot be maintained without the uniform profeſſion and rigid practice of honeſty and fair-dealing. Whoever is unable, in this reſpect, to maintain a fair character, finds himſelf univerſally reprobated, is of courſe diſqualified for the exerciſe of any lucrative profeſſion, and becomes a ſort of outcaſt, who, like the ſtricken deer, is carefully avoided by the whole herd. Compared with ſo dreadful a misfortune, the gain which is likely to accrue from the moſt artful knavery is a mere trifle.

In ſuch a ſituation it becomes the object of early education to recommend and inculcate the rules of juſtice. Children are deterred from any failure in this reſpect, by

timely correction, and by the diſgrace which attends it. At a more advanced period of life, the principles of honour, dictated by the general ſentiments of mankind, and communicated through the different ranks and orders of ſociety, confirm the ſame doctrine. In addition to theſe conſiderations, religion beſtows her aid, by repreſenting what is infamous among men, as offenſive to the Deity, and as incurring the effects of his diſpleaſure; while the ſanctions of civil government are employed in repreſſing ſuch diſorders, by the ſalutary example of human puniſhments.

Theſe principles and habits which characterize a mercantile age and country, are apt to appear moſt conſpicuous in that part of the inhabitants who are actually engaged in trade; becauſe they feel moſt powerfully the influence of the various motives which have been mentioned. In the moſt commercial nations of Europe, it is not, indeed, conſidered as inconſiſtent with the rules of fair trade, to lay hold of an accidental ſcarcity for enhancing the price of any commodity; but a merchant of credit is accuſtomed

tomed to deal at a word, and to take no advantage of the ignorance of his cuſtomer. Among the reſt of the inhabitants, who traffic occaſionally, the ſame ſcrupulous punctuality is not required; and it is not unuſual to chaffer, or even to over-reach in a bargain. This is particularly the caſe in the ſale of commodities, which have, in ſome degree, an arbitrary value; as of horſes, where even the country gentleman is frequently not aſhamed to become a ſpecies of horſe jockey.

The manners of rude nations are, in the preſent view, diametrically oppoſite to thoſe of a commercial people. Barbarians, whatever may be their other virtues, are but little acquainted with the rules of juſtice; they have ſeldom any regard to their promiſes, and are commonly addicted to theft and rapine. This is evident from the hiſtory of all early nations. In Captain Cook's firſt voyage to Otaheite, the inhabitants of that ſland were ſo far from being aſhamed of heir thefts, that upon being challenged, hey held up the ſtolen goods in triumph at heir ſucceſs. In Kamtſchatſka, it is ſaid, that

that a young woman has difficulty to procure a huſband, until ſhe has given proof of her dexterity in filching*. Among the ancient Egyptians there was no puniſhment for theft†; nor among the Gauls, when the crime was committed between the members of different tribes‡.

In the highlands of Scotland, ſtealing of cattle was denominated *lifting*; a term to which no blame appears to have been attached; and it is a well-known fact, that an inhabitant of that country, who, upon the ſuppreſſion of the rebellion, 1745, had the Pretender under his protection, and who had not been tempted to deliver him up by the great premium offered by government, was at a ſubſequent period tried at Inverneſs, and condemned to a capital puniſhment for horſe-ſtealing.

As in countries highly advanced in trade and manufactures, the trading part of the inhabitants are the faireſt and moſt punctual in their dealings, they are, in the infancy

* See the accounts of the Ruſſian emiſſaries.

† Aul. Gell. Noct. Att. lib. 11. 58.

‡ Cæſar. de bell. Gall. lib. 6. 5. 23.

of

of commerce, the moſt knaviſh and diſhoneſt.

In a rude and military age, mechanics and tradeſmen, who follow ſedentary profeſſions, are deſpiſed on account of their unwarlike diſpoſitions, and from the low eſtimation in which they are held, become degraded in their own eyes, and regardleſs of their character and behaviour. The firſt merchants, who are a ſort of pedlars, wandering from place to place, and frequently reduced to the neceſſity of begging their bread and their lodging among ſtrangers, are even in a meaner condition than artificers, or labourers, who enjoy a fixed reſidence in the midſt of their kindred and acquaintance. When Ulyſſes, in Homer, is twitted with being a wandering merchant, the patient hero is unable to bear this unmerited reproach; and though he had before determined to conceal his rank, he ſtarts up immediately, to wipe off the aſperſion, by diſtinguiſhing himſelf in the athletic exerciſes.

So long as the ancient Romans preſerved their military character, they conſidered the

profeſſion of a merchant as diſgraceful to a free citizen. In modern Europe, trade and manufactures were alſo, for many centuries, confined to that claſs of the people who remained in a ſpecies of ſervitude.

From the want of a regular market, for aſcertaining the price of commodities, it is alſo more difficult, in the firſt dawn of mercantile improvements, to diſcover and reſtrain the fraud of individuals. The pedlar, who provides a ſtock of goods from different quarters, and retails the various articles to perſons at a diſtance from each other, may almoſt always impoſe upon his cuſtomers with little hazard of detection, and is laid under ſtrong temptation to avail himſelf of contingencies for increaſing his profits.

The mercantile profeſſion ſeems, accordingly, in all countries where trade is in a low ſtate, to be conſidered as peculiarly connected with knavery and injuſtice. Among the early Greek nations, a merchant, and a private, were underſtood to be nearly ſynonimous terms; and the ſame tutelary deity, who preſided over merchants, became

alſo the patron of cheats and pick-pockets.

Cicero, whoſe opinion we may ſuppoſe was founded upon the manners of his countrymen, declares that a great wholeſale merchant, who imports goods from every quarter, may have a tolerable character; but that a retailer, who buys with a view of ſelling immediately, is engaged in a very mean employment; becauſe he can make no profit, unleſs he becomes a great liar*. Mr. Pope appears to have rather injudiciouſly transferred this thought to the tradeſmen of his own country.

"The next a tradeſman, meek, and much a liar."

In Armenia, Perſia, and many other eaſtern regions, commerce is managed, in a

* "Mercatura antem, ſi tenuis eſt, ſordida putanda eſt: "ſin magna et copioſa, multa undique apportans, mul-"tiſque ſine vanitate impartiens, non eſt admodum "vituperanda."—"Sordidi etiam putandi qui mercantur "a mercatoribus quod ſtatim vendant. Nihil enim "proficiunt niſi admodum mentcantur." [*Cicero de offic. Lib.* 1. § 42.

great

great meaſure, by a ſet of wandering merchants, who are not only deſtitute of protection, but even liable to be frequently plundered by government. It can hardly be expected that theſe people, who are often obliged to bury a part of their ſtock, and to inveſt a part of it in jewels, that they may be able to conceal, or ſuddenly to withdraw their effects, will be ſcrupulouſly punctual in their tranſactions, or that they will not, by exorbitant profit in ſome caſes, endeavour to compenſate the loſſes and hazards which they ſuſtain in others.

The Jews were a people, who, on account of their ſingular manners and cuſtoms, and their uncommon religious rites and ceremonies, had incurred the ridicule, and even in ſome degree the hatred of other nations. In theſe unfortunate circumſtances, they found little degradation in a mean employment, and therefore betook themſelves very generally to merchandize, in thoſe periods and countries were it was held in ſome degree ignominious. This was more eſpecially the caſe after the Chriſtian religion had ſpread itſelf over Europe, and had overwhelmed

whelmed that once choſen people in recent odium and averſion. The Jews became early the principle traders of the modern European nations; and in that capacity acquired immenſe riches; while in conformity to the ſtate of commerce at that period, they obtained univerſally the character of knavery and diſhoneſty; a character which they appear to have long borne without murmuring, and which, even at this day, notwithſtanding the great revolution in the rank and behaviour of mercantile people, they have never been able fully to obliterate.

But the circumſtances of a nation which has been enriched by trade are not more friendly to juſtice, than unfavourable to generoſity, and to the higher exertions of benevolence.

That a man ſhould be induced to a conſtant obſervance of the rules of juſtice, nothing further is commonly requiſite than to underſtand his own pecuniary intereſt; but before he can become eminently generous or benevolent, he muſt reſolve to ſacrifice that intereſt to the good of others. Juſtice

is

is the reſult of a deliberate purpoſe to reject an incidental advantage for obtaining an ultimate, and much greater profit. Generoſity is the fruit of a violent impulſe, which overlooks all private and ſelfiſh conſiderations. The careful and penurious tradeſman, the induſtrious and active manufacturer, or merchant, can have little temptation to deſert the one, but in the courſe of his profeſſional views, he meets with as little incitement to practice the other. To be juſt is to breathe his natural element; to require that he ſhould be generous is to invert his ordinary functions, and to make him ſubſiſt by organs to which he has not been accuſtomed.

In a commercial country, the mercantile ſpirit is not confined to tradeſmen or merchants; from a ſimilarity of ſituation it pervades, in ſome degree, all orders and ranks, and by the influence of habit and example, it is communicated, more or leſs, to every member of the community. Individuals form their notions of propriety according to a general ſtandard, and faſhion their morals in conformity to the prevailing taſte of the times. By living much in ſociety, and maintaining

maintaining an intimate correſpondence, they are led alſo to a frequent and ready communication of their thoughts and ſentiments. They learn by experience to do this, without hurting the feelings of one another; to conceal their own ſelfiſhneſs or contempt of others; to aſſume a tone of moderation, deference, and reſpect; and, without apparent reſtraint or effort, to accommodate their behaviour to the diſpoſition and temper of their company, while in this manner, they improve in the arts of civility and politeneſs, they can hardly fail to cultivate their ſocial feelings, by participating in the pleaſures and pains of each other, and by mutual endeavours to promote the former, and to relieve or ſoften the latter. But this intercourſe is often little more than a petty traffic, which aims merely at the purchaſe of reciprocal good offices; or when it proceeds from better motives, it is the offſpring of a ſubordinate, and in ſome meaſure a ſpeculative humanity, which in the caſe of any ſerious diſtreſs, contents itſelf with weeping and lamenting over the afflicted, but never thinks of ſacrificing any great intereſt to afford him relief.

Even this tinſel reciprocation of ſmall benefits, which people are apt to value more than it deſerves, but which in reality is of ſignal utility in removing the inconveniences, and improving the comforts which attend our journey of human life, is frequently interrupted by thoſe oppoſite and jarring paſſions which ariſe amid the active purſuits of a commercial nation. In a rude age, where there is little induſtry, or deſire of accumulation, neighbouring independent ſocieties are apt to rob and plunder each other; but the members of the ſame ſociety are attracted by a common intereſt, and are often ſtrongly united in the bands of friendſhip and affection, by mutual exertions of benevolence, or by accidental habits of ſympathy. But in a country where no body is idle, and where every perſon is eager to augment his fortune, or to improve his circumſtances, there occur innumerable competitions and rivalſhips, which contract the heart, and ſet mankind at variance. In proportion as every man is attentive to his own advancement, he is vexed and tormented by every obſtacle to his proſperity, and prompted

prompted to regard his competitors with envy, reſentment, and other malignant paſſions.

The purſuit of riches becomes a ſcramble, in which the hand of every man is againſt every other. Hence the diſſentions among perſons of the ſame trade or profeſſion, which are more conſpicuous according as the oppoſition of intereſt is more direct and pointed. The phyſicians, the apothecaries, and the lawyers of a ſmall town are commonly not in ſpeaking terms; they are not more inſtigated to advance their own ſucceſs than to thwart and oppoſe that of each other; and even the cuſtomers of each party are frequently involved in the quarrel. The ſame principles exhibit themſelves with leſs indecorum, perhaps, or violence, but not leſs invariably, through the whole commercial world. That there is no friendſhip in trade is an eſtabliſhed maxim among traders. Every man for himſelf, and God Almighty for us all, is their fundamental doctrine.

Among an active and poliſhed people, the deſire of fame and diſtinction is productive of competitions and jealouſies yet more extenſive.

tenſive. Neither age, nor ſex, nor condition; neither wiſdom, nor folly; neither learning, nor ignorance, is exempted from the ſerious, and the ludicrous diſcord which originates in this univerſal paſſion, or from the acrimony and malice which it often inſpires: whether it appears in the light airy ſhape of vanity, which glides through every corner of ſociety, and preſents the aſpect of a rival in every accompliſhment or agreeable talent; from that of the well-dreſſed coxcomb who figures at a ball, to that of the eloquent ſpeaker who ſhakes an admiring ſenate: or whether it aſſumes the graver form of ambition, which divide mankind into parties, inflames their party zeal, and their party animoſities, and ſheltering itſelf under the multitude of aſſociates, bids defiance to the ſenſe of ſhame, and becomes deaf to the voice of humanity. Of this paſſion, the jealouſy among authors, will, perhaps, be regarded as the moſt remarkable inſtance; but it ſeems to be ſo, chiefly becauſe the parties have more the capacity of publiſhing their diſputes, and of circulating the bitter animoſities by which they are agitated.

As

As the purſuit of wealth, the great object of a mercantile nation, contributes to ſcatter the ſeeds of envy and ſelfiſhneſs, the luxurious and voluptuous habits, which, as I formerly obſerved, become alſo prevalent among the ſame people, tend to nouriſh and ſtrengthen thoſe baneful productions.

Senſual pleaſures, whether founded upon the enjoyments of the table, or upon the propenſity which unites the ſexes, are all of a ſelfiſh nature; however they may be connected in many caſes, with the exerciſe of ſocial diſpoſitions. The mirth and feſtivity of the epicure terminates in the gratification of his palate; and the boon companion of a luxurious age will commonly prefer the company where he finds the beſt dinner. The pleaſure of a love-intrigue ſuppoſes a communication of ſentiments; but the voluptuary ſcruples not to procure it at the expence of ruin to the object of his wiſhes.

But what more eſpecially merits attention, is, that the faſhionable pleaſures of an opulent nation become the ſource of enormous expence, by which multitudes are led to exceed their income, and become embarraſſed

in their circumſtances. To men who are, at the ſame time, addicted to expenſive habits, and forced to ſtruggle with pecuniary difficulties, wealth is the conſtant idol, the ſovereign diſpenſer of happineſs; and poverty, a dreadful ſpectre, uſurping the place of an awakened conſcience, to haunt and terrify the diſordered imagination.

While the peculiar habits of an opulent people are thus calculated to increaſe the bias which is already too ſtrong, by fortifying the love of money, they give unavoidably a particular turn and direction to that paſſion. They afford a ſpur to the acquiſition of riches, but they encourage, at the ſame time, and promote the expenditure. The avarice of a frugal, and that of a luxurious age, aſſume very frequently, a different, and in ſome reſpects, an oppoſite character. The character of the former is that of a miſer, who ſcruples not to practiſe the meaneſt arts of accumulation, is unable to take any uſe of what he has gathered, but living in conſtant terror of poverty, is afraid to lend out his money at intereſt, and has recourſe to the wretched precaution of concealing

cealing it in the earth. Such are the leading features of the miſer, as repreſented by the poets of antiquity, which have been copied by Moliere with more fidelity and humour, than diſcernment in applying them to the manners of his own age; for the original of this picture is now rarely to be found. The modern uſurer is not leſs rapacious, nor leſs abſorbed in the conſtant purſuit of gain than the ancient; but he is more enterpriſing, and leſs ready to forget the end of his labours. He never loſes a penny by hugging his treaſure in ſecret, or by hiding it in the ground. Goaded, on either ſide, by the love of money, and by the love of pleaſure, he obeys alternately the dictates of theſe oppoſite paſſions, and hoards that he may ſpend to the beſt advantage. He is covetous and profuſe *; but his profuſion is merely the avarice of ſenſual gratification.

From theſe obſervations it may be concluded, that the manners of an opulent and luxurious age, are, upon the whole, favourable to the general intercourſe of ſociety.

* Sui profuſus, alieni cupidus. SALUST.

In

In the common relations of neighbourhood and acquaintance, it is not expected that individuals will make any great ſacrifice of their own intereſt to that of others. If men abſtain from the commiſſion of crimes, if they obſerve the rules of juſtice in their various tranſactions, if they are punctual to their word, ſo as to create a mutual confidence in their probity and good faith, and if to theſe virtues they add the conſtant exerciſe of thoſe inferior good offices which are dictated by humanity and the deſire of pleaſing, they are likely to communicate to each other, and to enjoy, all that ſecurity, eaſe, and tranquillity, all that comfort and ſatisfaction which can reaſonably be deſired. The practice of theſe common virtues will be ſufficient to facilitate the accumulation of wealth, or to ſecure the fruits of induſtry, to thoſe who are in ordinary proſperous circumſtances; and at the ſame time to afford a moderate relief or aſſiſtance to thoſe who may be reduced to indigence or diſtreſs. The higher exertions of benevolence are out of the queſtion; but a limited and regulated charity is perfectly

conſiſtent

conſiſtent with the manners of a refined and poliſhed people; and it may, perhaps, be affirmed with reaſon, that, from prudent and well-directed interpoſitions of that nature, more diffuſive benefit is likely to ariſe, both to the public and to individuals, than from the warmeſt occaſional ebullitions of tender-hearted and thoughtleſs generoſity. This, at leaſt, is indiſputable, that mere generoſity without the punctual obſervance of the rules of juſtice, is of leſs conſequence to the proſperity and good order of ſociety, than the latter, though without any conſiderable ſhare of the former.

But although the ſpirit of opulent and trading nations tends evidently to improve the intercourſe of mankind, in their more general and diſtant connections, it muſt be confeſſed, that when we turn our eyes to the private and intimate relations of human life, we are led, in ſome reſpects, to a different concluſion. In their domeſtic relations, the happineſs of mankind ſeems to depend more upon the warmth of friendſhip and benevolence, than upon the alderman-like virtue of juſtice. A fond huſband expects more

more from his wife than merely that ſhe will not ſteal from him. Much more is required from the father of a family, than that he ſhould do no injury to his children, or that he ſhould beſtow ſmall charities upon them. The domeſtic affections, which conſtitute the chief happineſs of private life, are nothing but various modifications of ſympathy and friendſhip; and theſe, it is to be feared, are not likely to be improved by the peculiar manners of a mercantile and luxurious age. Marriage becomes then almoſt always an intereſted connection, in which thoſe pecuniary conſiderations by which it was formed are likely to keep the aſcendant during the whole of its courſe. On the part of the huſband, it is frequently a mercenary bargain calculated to gain a livelihood, or to plaſter a broken fortune, by yoking himſelf with folly, age, or decrepitude. On the part of the wife, it is as frequently the ſucceſsful iſſue of a decoy, by which, under the auſpices of a careful and experienced mother, ſhe has contrived to recommend her perſonal attractions, and factitious accompliſhments, to the higheſt bidder. The effects of

opulence

opulence and luxury are no leſs hurtful to the parental and filial affections. The father, immerſed in the ſordid purſuits of the world, is apt to look upon his family as a tax upon his pleaſures, and to find himſelf elbowed by children; who, as they grow up in years, require from their increaſing demands, a ſuitable retrenchment of his own perſonal expences. If even the parents are more conſcientious, and leſs tainted with the vices of the age, they are likely to meet with miſerable diſappointments and mortifications from the behaviour of their children, who frequently corrupted by bad example and by the ſelfiſh maxims which prevail around them, correſpond ſo little to the partial hopes and anxious cares of parental fondneſs, as to waſte their time in idleneſs and diſſipation, and even to wait with impatience for the full poſſeſſion of that hereditary fortune which will render them their own maſters. The future diſtribution of that fortune may alſo become a ſource of diſcontent among the children themſelves, to poiſon their mutual affections, and to interrupt that agreeable

intercourſe which their ſituation has otherwiſe a tendency to produce.

The ſame commercial ſpirit is adverſe to that peculiar attachment which ariſes among friends, united by particular habits of intimacy, and by ſimilarity of taſte and diſpoſitions. The ſituation of mankind in a rude age, which prevents them from being engroſſed by objects of pecuniary intereſt, and which prompts them to frequent exertions for the protection and defence of each other, is highly favourable to ſuch peculiar connections. The learned father, L'Afitan, obſerves, that among the American ſavages, it is uſual for individuals to form ſuch intimate friendſhips as give riſe to a perfect community of goods; inſomuch that they have no ſeparate intereſt, and even think it incumbent on them to abſtain from intermarriages between their reſpective families, as if they were near relations. To ſacrifice their lives for each other is regarded as a duty which theſe generous and ſimple-hearted friends are never backward to fulfil. When a warrior is made captive by his enemies, and put to death, as he commonly is by the moſt excruciating

ciating tortures, he frequently pronounces the name of a particular perſon, and calls upon him to avenge his torments. This perſon is the friend of his boſom, who is rendered ſo eager for vengeance, and ſo careleſs of life, that hovering about the place where the bloody tragedy has been acted, he commonly ſoon falls into the hands of the ſame people. That ingenious author compares the friendſhips of thoſe barbarians with the connections of a ſimilar nature which have been ſo highly celebrated in the early hiſtory of the Greeks; of Hercules and Iolas, of Theſeus and Peritheus, of Achilles and Patroclus, of Oreſtes and Pylades, and of ſeveral other diſtinguiſhed warriors of antiquity; whoſe attachment has appeared ſo little conformable to the manners of a later age as to be frequently miſunderſtood and miſrepreſented.

The friendſhips of a luxurious and mercantile country are of a different complexion. They are cool and ſober, breathing no ardour of enthuſiaſm, producing no unreſerved confidence, requiring no ſacrifice either of life or fortune. It is enough that you ſhould rejoice in your friend's proſperity; that you

ſhould relieve his diſtreſs when it can be done without inconvenience to yourſelf; and that you ſhould be always ready to aſſiſt him with your good advice. But you ought never to forget the famous prudential maxim, of conſtantly behaving to him as if he were one day to become your enemy. Your friend, as friends go in the preſent age, is a perſon whom you eſteem, in whoſe company you receive peculiar pleaſure, whoſe conduct in his abſence you endeavour to defend, whoſe party you embrace in his quarrels or diſputes with others, and upon whom, in a word, you confer a double portion of thoſe good offices and civilities which paſs current in the intercourſe of common acquaintance.

After all, though the virtue of juſtice commonly maintains the aſcendant in opulent and luxurious nations, there may occur particular ſituations where this order of things is completely reverſed. Among ſuch a people, the ſtrict obſervance of the rules of juſtice proceeds chiefly from conſiderations of intereſt, and from the eſtabliſhment of a general ſtandard of behaviour, which has been founded on thoſe conſiderations,

tions, and with which individuals, if they wiſh to preſerve their character, find it neceſſary to comply. This may be conſidered as the effect of artificial diſcipline, tending to reſtrain and controul the feelings of avarice, which, in that ſtate of ſociety, are commonly wound up to a high pitch, and are apt to form the ruling principle. It may happen, therefore, in ſingular circumſtances, where many perſons are tempted in conjunction to the ſame acts of injuſtice, where they have an opportunity of acquiring ſuddenly an immenſe profit by their tranſgreſſion, and where the delinquents are ſo numerous, and of ſuch rank as in ſome meaſure to keep one another in countenance, that they ſhould give way to the immediate impulſe of their paſſions, and that having once broken through the reſtraints to which they were formerly ſubjected, they ſhould run into very great enormities.

The officers who governed the ancient Roman provinces were in this tempting ſituation. They poſſeſſed an almoſt unlimited authority over the inhabitants, and were ſubject to no other controul but that

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of the ſenate, the members of which, having either enjoyed, or expecting to enjoy, ſimilar offices, had commonly a fellow-feeling with their ſituations, and were, therefore, not likely to take a ſtrict account of their abuſes. Their number was, at the ſame time, ſo great, as to lighten the ſhare of cenſure which might fall upon individuals; while their diſtance from the capital obſcured their behaviour, or concealed it entirely from their friends at home. In theſe circumſtances, and inflamed with the rage of accumulation, they ſeem, as with one conſent, to have burſt through the reſtraints of juſtice and humanity, and to have put in practice every engine of extortion, fraud, and oppreſſion. As the ſame ſet of officers did not commonly remain above a year or two in the ſame province, no time was to be loſt; and when having amaſſed enormous wealth, they returned to Rome, to enjoy the fruits of their induſtry, they found another expedient for the improvement of their fortunes, by lending money at exorbitant intereſt, to the very people

people whom they had already pillaged. This kind of trade became ſo univerſal, that, however prohibited by the laws, it was not held, it ſeems, to be diſgraceful; and, though the legal intereſt was reſtricted to about twelve per cent. more than forty or fifty per cent. appears to have been frequently exacted even by the moſt reſpectable citizens.

The great mercantile companies, eſtabliſhed by the modern European nations in very diſtant countries, and inveſted with the privileges of monopoly, may be regarded, in the preſent queſtion, as in a ſituation ſimilar to that of the ancient rulers of the Roman provinces; with this additional circumſtance, that accumulation being in the direct line of their profeſſion, we may expect that it will be proſecuted by them in a more ſyſtematic and regular manner. If a company of this kind ſhall acquire an extenſive territory, and be placed at ſuch a diſtance from the mother-country as to be, in ſome meaſure, emancipated from her juriſdiction, it is likely that pecuniary profit will

will be the great object in exercising the powers of government; and if the servants of this company, from the extent of their business, and from the implicit confidence necessarily reposed in them, shall become independent of their masters, there is ground to apprehend, that the interest of the public will be assumed as a pretence, to justify the most oppressive measures; and that a set of merchants, acting in concert with one another, and provided with an excuse for their abuses, will proceed, without fear or shame, in plundering the inhabitants, and in building up such fortunes as may enable them, in another hemisphere, not only to appear with dazzling splendour, but secure them from any inquiry into the means by which their wealth has been procured.

There can be little doubt that report has often greatly exaggerated and misrepresented the abuses committed on such occasions. But every exaggeration supposes a foundation in reality. Every one must be convinced, that, if the merchants of a country are invested with unlimited authority, their

their profits will be commenſurate to their deſires.

" Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
" Auri ſacra fames * ?"

* In a ſtriking picture, exhibited by an eloquent ſpeaker of the preſent day, a ſupreme judge is repreſented as acting in ſubſerviency to that " ſacred thirſt," and as making a ſolemn progreſs over the country, " carrying " a bloody ſtandard in one hand, and picking pockets " with the other."

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

The Progreſs of Science relative to Law and Government.

AS the advancement of commerce and civilization tends to promote the virtue of ſtrict juſtice, it of courſe diſpoſes mankind to cultivate and improve the ſcience of law. By attention and experience, and by a gradual refinement of their feelings, men attain a nicer diſcrimination in matters of right and wrong, and acquire more ſkill and dexterity in ſettling the claims and diſputes of individuals, or in proportioning puniſhments to the various offences which may invade the peace of ſociety.

There is this remarkable difference between juſtice and the other virtues, that the former can be reduced under general rules, capable, in ſome degree, of accuracy and preciſion; while the latter, more uncertain and variable in their limits, can frequently be

be no otherwiſe determined than from a complex view of their circumſtances, and muſt, in each particular caſe, be ſubmitted to the immediate deciſion of taſte and ſentiment. Juſtice requires no more than that I ſhould abſtain from hurting my neighbour, in his perſon, his property, or his reputation; that I ſhould pay the debts, or perform the ſervices, which by my contracts, or by the courſe of my behaviour, I have given him reaſon to expect from me; and that, if I have ever tranſgreſſed in any of theſe particulars, I ſhould make a ſuitable compenſation and reinſtate him, as far as poſſible, in thoſe advantages of which I have unwarrantably deprived him. The line of duty ſuggeſted by this mere negative virtue, can be clearly marked, and its boundaries diſtinctly aſcertained. It reſembles a matter of calculation, and may, in ſome ſort, be regulated by the ſquare and the compaſs.

But the other virtues, thoſe more eſpecially which lead us to promote the poſitive happineſs of our neighbours, admit of a greater variety of aſpects, and are of a more delicate nature. What is the preciſe behaviour

viour conſiſtent with the moſt perfect friendſhip, generoſity, gratitude, or other benevolent affections, may often be a difficult queſtion; and the ſituations which give riſe to the complete exerciſe of thoſe virtues are ſo diverſified by a multiplicity of minute circumſtances, that there ſeldom occur two inſtances altogether alike; and there is no room for determining any number of caſes according to the ſame general view.

Though mankind, therefore, have in all ages, given a very univerſal attention to morality, though their conſtant aim and endeavour has been to recommend themſelves, one to another, by practiſing, or by ſeeming to practice, thoſe virtues which procure eſteem, or affection and confidence —they have made, after all, but ſlender advances in digeſting their knowledge upon the ſubject, and in reducing it to a regular ſyſtem. Philoſophers have been able to do little more than to exhibit a deſcription or picture, more or leſs animated, of the principal virtues and vices, together with their various combinations in the characters of individuals, and at the ſame time to ſuggeſt

conſiderations and views, which, from the condition of human nature, are likely to produce an admiration and love of virtue, as well as a deteſtation and abhorrence of vice.

The firſt moraliſts, among an ignorant and ſimple people, were contented with giving general advices, for the benefit of ſuch as were deſtitute of experience, to guard againſt the temptations to vice, and the irregular influence of the paſſions. Parents, deſirous of promoting the welfare of their children, men of ſagacity, who, in the courſe of a long life, had ſurveyed the viciſſitudes of human affairs, were induced to communicate the fruits of their experience, and to inculcate ſuch obſervations and maxims as might correct the errors and imprudencies to which mankind are peculiarly liable. Hence the numerous proverbs which have been circulated in all nations, containing ſuch moral and prudential maxims, as, from an apparent ſhrewdneſs of remark, from ſtrength or felicity of alluſion, or from any peculiar point of expreſſion, were thought worthy of attention,

tion, and frequently repeated. Of a ſimilar nature, but uniting, in ſome caſes, a train of reflections upon the ſame ſubject, are thoſe obſervations, and advices, relating to the conduct of life, which have been collected by early writers, or delivered by ancient ſages of high reputation; ſuch as, the proverbs of Solomon, the words of Agur, the wiſdom of the ſon of Sirah, a part of the writings of Heſiod, and the ſayings of thoſe who are denominated the wiſe men of Greece.

Succeeding writers endeavoured to explain and enforce theſe obſervations and maxims by hiſtorical events, real or fictitious; and to illuſtrate their truth, by allegorical repreſentations, taken from the brute creation, or from thoſe different parts of nature in which we may trace any reſemblance to human actions and paſſions. Of this latter ſort are the parables of Scripture, the fables known to us by the name of Pilpay, which appear to have enjoyed a very ancient and extenſive reputation in the eaſtern world; and thoſe of equal celebrity in Europe, which are aſcribed to Æſop, and

and which have been tranſlated, paraphraſed, and embelliſhed by ſuch a multitude of eminent authors. Even after thoſe early obſervations, from the general diffuſion of knowledge, have ceaſed to convey much inſtruction, the apologue or fable, has continued, with ſeveral men of genius, to be a favourite mode of compoſition, on account of the delicate ſtrokes with which it is capable of exhibiting the follies and foibles of human life.

When men had been accuſtomed to conſider in detail the ſeveral branches of human conduct, they were led by degrees to more connected views, and extenſive reaſonings. They were led to enumerate and arrange the principal virtues and vices, and to diſtribute them into different claſſes, according to the various feelings or paſſions, from which they procced, or the different ends to which they are directed. The celebrated and well known diviſion of the virtues into four great claſſes, uſually denominated the four cardinal virtues, which has been handed down to us by the Greek and Roman writers, and which is reported to have been brought

brought by Pythagoras from the eaſt, appears to be a very ancient, and at the ſame time, a ſucceſsful attempt of this nature.

The arrangement and claſſification of the ſeveral virtues, could hardly fail to occaſion enquiries and diſcuſſions concerning the peculiar character of each; and more eſpecially to ſuggeſt an examination of the circumſtances by which all the virtues are diſtinguiſhed from the oppoſite vices. This gave riſe to the far-famed queſtion, *Wherein conſiſts virtue?*

The great diſtinction between virtue and vice appears to conſiſt in the different ſentiments which they excite in the beholders, and in their oppoſite tendency, to produce *happineſs* or *miſery* to mankind.

There is in virtue a native beauty and excellence, which is felt and acknowledged by all the world; which, from the immediate contemplation of it, and without regard to its conſequences, is the genuine ſource of pleaſure and ſatisfaction; and which procures to the perſon in whom it is diſcovered, univerſal love and eſteem, with various modifications of benevolence. The natural deformity

deformity of vice; the diſguſt and averſion with which it is regarded; and the contempt and abhorrence, or the indignation and reſentment which it excites, are no leſs conſpicuous. That theſe feelings exiſt in the human mind is indiſputable: but whether they are ſimple and original feelings, intended by nature for this purpoſe alone; or whether they are excited from different views and reaſonings, and conſequently, are capable of explanation and analyſis, has been the ſubject of much philoſophical diſquiſition; a diſquiſition highly curious and intereſting to the lovers of metaphyſical knowledge; though, in relation to practical morality, of little or no importance.

The tendency of all virtuous actions to produce happineſs, either to the perſon who performs them or to others, and the contrary tendency of all vicious actions, are conſiderations, which, to the bulk of mankind, will appear of ſtill greater magnitude, in creating a preference of the former to the latter. In this view, thoſe virtuous actions which promote a man's own good, are agreeable to a ſpectator, from thoſe bene-

volent feelings which render him pleafed with the happineſs of the perſon who performs them; while thoſe actions which promote the good of others, gratify the ſelfiſh feelings of the ſpectator, and call forth a ſort of gratitude from every perſon who conceives himſelf within the ſphere of their beneficial influence. We need not be ſurpriſed, therefore, that men ſhould univerſally beſtow much higher applauſe upon the benevolent, than upon the ſelfiſh virtues; or that ſome eminent philoſophers have conſidered the latter in the light merely of uſeful qualities, which are not the proper objects of moral approbation. The perſon who performs a benevolent action appears in the light of a benefactor; and, as we readily ſuppoſe ourſelves to be the objects of his beneficence, we feel, upon that account, a diſpoſition to make a ſuitable return of good offices; we look upon him as peculiarly worthy of our good will and affection; and are thence led to form a notion of his meriting a reward.

From conſidering the beneficial tendency of all the virtues, philoſophers proceeded

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to a more general enquiry, concerning the ſupreme good or happineſs of mankind, and the circumſtances by which it is produced; whether it be produced by virtue alone, or by what is called pleaſure, or from the union and co-operation of both?

Such appear to be the principal ſteps by which men have advanced in cultivating the general ſcience of morality, which have undoubtedly been of great utility in preſenting ſuch views and conſiderations as were fitted to awaken the nobleſt and beſt affections of the heart; but which often terminating in vague reflection, or ſpeculative diſquiſition afford no ſpecific information, no preciſe land-marks for the regulation of our conduct. If we do not miſs our way in the journey of life, it is more from our general knowledge of the compaſs, than from any directions we receive concerning the ſeveral windings and turnings of the road.

But in relation to ſtrict juſtice, the attention of mankind has been excited and directed in a different manner, and has produced an examination of particulars much more minute and accurate. As individuals who

have much intercourſe, are likely, on many occaſions, to experience an oppoſition of intereſt, and if they are independent of each other, muſt be liable to numerous diſputes in matters of right, they have in the infancy of ſociety, no other method of terminating any difference which cannot be amicably adjuſted than either by fighting, or by referring it to the deciſion of a common arbiter; and this latter mode of accommodation, which flatters the ſanguine expectations of either party, and which, by preventing a quarrel, muſt commonly be agreeable to their private friends, as well as to the friends of good order and public tranquillity, is likely to be more frequently adopted in proportion as, by the habits of living in ſociety, people become leſs quarrelſome in their temper, and more under the guidance of prudence and diſcretion.

The arbiters moſt frequently chöſen on thoſe occaſions, will probably be perſons who from their eminent reputation for wiſdom and integrity, poſſeſs the confidence of both parties, and by their high ſtation, and ſuperior influence, are capable of giving weight

weight to their deciſions. The longer theſe men have officiated in the ſame employment, provided they have acted with tolerable propriety, the reſpect paid to their opinions will be the greater, aud the diſpoſition to treat them with deference and ſubmiſſion, will become the more habitual. Their own efforts to render their ſentences effectual will alſo, from conſiderations of expediency, be ſupported by the general voice of the community; till at length, by the aſſignment of an armed force to aſſiſt them in enforcing obedience, they are inveſted with power to determine law-ſuits independent of any reference of parties, and thus, in the natural progreſs of things, are converted into regular and permanent judges.

Correſponding to the advices and prudential maxims which are circulated by men of experience and obſervation, in the primitive cultivation of morality, are the deciſions of arbiters and judges, which conſtitute the foundation of the ſcience of law. From the various diſputes of individuals, and from the various claims that are ſucceſſively decided

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and enforced, there is formed a ſet of practical rules of juſtice, which are gradually multiplied, and according to the different ſituations and relations of mankind in ſociety, gradually extended and diverſified.

The diſputes among mankind are innumerable; but as one diſpute is often very like another, it is apt to be decided in a ſimilar manner; and when a number of caſes have been determined upon the ſame grounds, there is introduced a general rule, which from the influence of habit and of analogy, is extended, even without examination to other caſes of the ſame kind. Though this procedure originates in a propenſity natural to all mankind, it is doubtleſs recommended and confirmed by its utility. The general rules of law are of ſignal ſervice, by enabling every perſon to ſimplify his tranſactions, as well as to aſcertain the tenor of conduct which he is bound to maintain, and by proving at the ſame time, a check to the partiality of judges, who muſt be aſhamed or afraid to deviate from

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that beaten path, which is univerſally known, and eaſily diſtinguiſhed.

The advantages, however, ariſing from the general rules of juſtice, are not without limitations. When a great number of claims are decided from the conſideration of thoſe outlines in which they all agree, the ſmaller circumſtances in which they happen to differ muſt of courſe be overlooked; and the deciſion may, therefore, in ſome inſtances, be productive of injuſtice. This is the foundation of that old complaint, which, in every country, has been made againſt the *extremity of the law*. It is neceſſary, for this reaſon, to forego in many caſes, the benefit of that uniformity and certainty derived from the ſtrict obſervance of a general rule, and by introducing an exception from the conſideration of what is equitable in particular circumſtances, to avoid the hardſhip which would otherwiſe fall upon individuals. We muſt on this as on many other occaſions, compare and balance the inconveniencies which preſent themſelves on oppoſite ſides, and be contented with ſubmitting to thoſe which are of the leaſt importance.

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The interpoſitions of equity, which are made in detached and ſingular circumſtances, are at firſt regarded as extraordinary deviations from that legal maxim, which however juſt and expedient in other caſes, is found in ſome particular inſtance, to be hard and oppreſſive. But when theſe interpoſitions have been often repeated in ſimilar ſituations, they become familiar and habitual; and ſuch of them as depend upon a common principle, are reduced into the ſame claſs, the boundaries of which are preciſely determined.

In this manner, by the ſucceſſive litigation of individuals, and by the continued experience and obſervation of judges, the ſcience of law grows up in ſociety, and advances more and more to a regular ſyſtem. Particular deciſions become the foundation of general rules, which are afterwards limited by particular exceptions; and theſe exceptions being alſo generalized, and reduced into different claſſes, are again ſubjected to future limitations. From a few parent ſtems, there iſſue various branches; and

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theſe are ſucceeded by ſubordinate ramifications; diminiſhing gradually in ſize, while they increaſe in number; ſeparated from each other by endleſs diviſions and ſubdiviſions; exhibiting a great multiplicity and variety of parts, uniformly and regularly adjuſted; and which may, therefore, be eaſily and readily traced through all their different connections.

But though the rules of juſtice derive their origin from the buſineſs of the world, and are introduced by the actual deciſions of judges, their extenſive utility is likely to attract the notice of ſpeculative reaſoners, and to render them the ſubject of criticiſm and philoſophical diſcuſſion. As from various cauſes the practical ſyſtem of law in any country is apt, in many reſpects, to deviate from that ſtandard of perfection which nature holds up to the ſpeculative mind, the detecting of its errors and imperfections, and the diſplay of its peculiar advantages, become an agreeable exerciſe to men of ingenuity and reflection; and from ſuch diſquiſitions, it is reaſonable to expect that the know-

knowledge of mankind will be extended their prejudices corrected, and uſeful improvements ſuggeſted.

In ſpeculating upon the ſyſtem of law in any country, it is natural to compare it with other ſyſtems, and by examining and contraſting the reſpective advantages or diſadvantages of each, to explain and illuſtrate the nature and tendency of different regulations. From theſe compariſons, purſued extenſively, and accompanied by ſuch reflections as they muſt naturally ſuggeſt, philoſophers at length conceived the idea of delivering a ſyſtem of law, free from the defects which occur in every practical eſtabliſhment, and which might correſpond in ſome meaſure, with our views of abſolute perfection; a noble idea which does not appear to have entered into the imagination of any Roman or Greek writer, and which may be regarded as one of the chief improvements in the philoſophy of modern Europe. Hence the ſyſtem of *juriſprudence*, which, after the revival of letters, have occurred in ſuch multitudes, and which have been dreſſed in different ſhapes, and with different

different degrees of accuracy by Grotius and other ſpeculative lawyers.

It muſt be acknowledged, that the execution of thoſe works has not equalled the merit of the attempt. Although they profeſs to deliver the rules of juſtice, abſtracted from the imperfections of every particular eſtabliſhment, they appear, for the moſt part, to follow implicitly, at leaſt, in ſeveral particulars, the ancient Roman ſyſtem, which, notwithſtanding the conſideration and celebrity it had very deſervedly attained, is in many of its doctrines erroneous, and in ſome of its principles narrow and illiberal.

A more material defect in moſt of the writers on juriſprudence is their not marking ſufficiently the boundaries between ſtrict law and mere morality. They ſeem to conſider, what a good man, from the utmoſt propriety of feelings and ſcruples of conſcience, would be diſpoſed to do, rather than what an upright judge would compel him to perform; and are thus led frequently to confound what is properly called juſtice (which requires that we ſhould avoid hurting our neighbours,) with generoſity or benevolence, which

which prompts us to increaſe their poſitive happineſs.

The attempts to delineate ſyſtems of jurisprudence, which have been ſo often repeated with more or leſs perſpicuity or conciſeneſs, but with little variation in ſubſtance, opened at length a new ſource of ſpeculation, by ſuggeſting an enquiry into the circumſtances which have occaſioned various and oppoſite imperfections in the law of different countries, and which have prevented the practical ſyſtem, in any, from attaining that improvement which we find no difficulty in conceiving. In the proſecution of this inquiry, more eſpecially by Preſident Monteſquieu, by Lord Hames, and by Dr. Smith, the attention of ſpeculative lawyers has been directed to examine the firſt formation and ſubſequent advancement of civil ſociety; the riſe, the gradual developement, and cultivation of arts and ſciences; the acquiſition and extenſion of property in all its different modifications, and the combined influence of theſe and other political cauſes, upon the manners and cuſtoms, the inſtitutions and laws of any people. By tracing in this manner

manner the natural hiſtory of legal eſtabliſhments, we may be enabled to account for the different aſpect which they aſſume in different ages and countries, to diſcover the peculiarity of ſituation which has, in any caſe, retarded or promoted their improvement, and to obtain, at the ſame time, ſatisfactory evidence of the uniformity of thoſe internal principles which are productive of ſuch various and apparently inconſiſtent operations.

The ſyſtem of law, in every country is divided into that part which regulates the powers of the ſtate, conſidered as a corporation or body politic; and that which regulates the conduct of the ſeveral members of which this corporation is compoſed. The former is the government, the law which *conſtitutes*; the latter, the law which is *conſtituted*. The former may with propriety, though not in the common acceptation be called the *public*; the latter the *private* law.

To government belongs the province of appointing judges for the determination of law-ſuits; of eſtabliſhing an armed force,

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to ſecure internal tranquillity as well as for defence againſt foreign enemies; and alſo, in caſes where the dictates of juſtice are ſilent, that of ſuperadding to the private law ſuch poſitive regulations or ſtatutes, as peculiar conjunctures may render neceſſary or expedient. It is evident, therefore, that the ſtate of the private law in any country muſt be entirely ſubordinate to the nature of its government; and that according to the merit or demerit of the latter, will be the excellence or deficiency of the former. The origin and progreſs of different public inſtitutions, and the manner in which they have ariſen, and been variouſly modified, from the circumſtances of mankind, and from the different improvements in ſociety, are on this account, objects of great curioſity, which preſent an important and leading ſpeculation in the natural hiſtory of law.

All government appears to be ultimately derived from two great principles. The firſt which I ſhall call *authority*, is the immediate effect of the peculiar qualities or circumſtances, by which any one member of ſociety may be exalted above another. The

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ſecond is the conſideration of the advantages to be derived from any political eſtabliſhment.

1. Superior bodily qualities, agility ſtrength; dexterity of hand, eſpecially in uſing the weapons employed in fighting; as well as uncommon mental endowments; wiſdom, knowledge, fidelity, generoſity, courage, are the natural ſources of admiration and reſpect, and conſequently of deference and ſubmiſſion. A ſchool-boy, ſuperior to his companions in courage and feats of activity, becomes often a leader of the ſchool, and acquires a very deſpotic authority. The ſtrongeſt man of a pariſh aſſumes a pre-eminence in their common diverſions, and is held up as their champion in every match or conteſt with their neighbours. The patriarchal government in the primitive ages of the world, and the authority poſſeſſed by the leaders of barbarous tribes in thoſe periods which preceded the accumulation of property, are known to have ariſen from ſimilar circumſtances. The heroes and demi-gods of antiquity, were indebted ſolely to their valour, and their wonderful

wonderful exploits, for that enthuſiaſtic admiration which they excited, and for that ſovereign power to which they were frequently exalted.

The acquiſition of property, whether derived from occupancy and labour in conformity to the rules of juſtice, or from robbery and oppreſſion, in defiance of every law, human and divine, became another and a more extenſive ſource of authority. Wealth, however improperly in the eye of a ſtrict moraliſt, ſeldom fails to procure a degree of admiration and reſpect. The poor are attracted and dazzled by the apparent happineſs and ſplendour of the rich; and they regard a man of large fortune with a ſort of wonder, and partial prepoſſeſſion, which diſpoſes them to magnify and overrate all his advantages. If they are ſo far beneath him as not to be ſoured by the malignity of envy, they behold with pleaſure and ſatisfaction the ſumptuouſneſs of his table, the magnificence of his equipage, the facility and quickneſs with which he is whirled from place to place, the number of his attendants, the readineſs with which they

obſerve

obſerve all his movements, and run to promote his wiſhes. Delighted with a ſituation which appears to them ſo agreeable, and catching from each other the contagion of ſympathetic feelings, they are often prompted by an enthuſiaſtic fervor, to exalt his dignity to promote his enjoyments, and to favour his purſuits. Without diſtinguiſhing the objects which figure in their imagination, they transfer to his perſon that ſuperiority which belongs properly to his condition, and are ſtruck with thoſe accompliſhments, and modes of behaviour, which his education has taught him to acquire, and which his rank and circumſtances have rendered habitual to him. They are of courſe embarraſſed in his preſence by impreſſions of awe and reverence, and loſing ſometimes the exerciſe of their natural powers are ſunk in abaſement and ſtupidity*.

The authority, however, of the rich over the poor is, doubtleſs, chiefly ſupported by ſelfiſh conſiderations. As in ſpending a

* Theory of Moral Sentiments.

great fortune, the owner gives employment, and conſequently ſubſiſtence to many individuals, all thoſe who, in this manner, obtain or expect any advantage have more or leſs an intereſt in paying him reſpect and ſubmiſſion. The influence which may be traced from this origin, operates in ſuch various directions is diſtributed in ſuch different proportions, and ſo diffuſed through every corner of ſociety, that it appears in its degree and extent to be incalculable. Uncommon perſonal talents occur but ſeldom; and the ſphere of their activity, ſo to ſpeak, is often very limited. But the inequalities in the diviſion of wealth are varied without end; and though their effect is greater in ſome ſituations of mankind than in others, they never ceaſe, in any, to introduce a correſpondent gradation and ſubordination of ranks.

Theſe original circumſtances, from which authority is derived, are gradually confirmed and ſtrengthened by their having long continued to flow in the ſame channel. The force of habit, the great controuler and governor of our actions, is in nothing more remark-

remarkable than in promoting the reſpect and ſubmiſſion claimed by our ſuperiors. By living in a ſtate of inferiority and dependence, the mind is inured to ſubjection; and the aſcendant which has been once gained is gradually rendered more complete and powerful.

But the force of habit is much more effectual in confirming the authority derived from wealth, than that which is founded on perſonal qualities. The ſuperior endowments, either of the body or of the mind, can ſeldom operate very long in the ſame direction. The ſon of an eminent general, or poet, or ſtateſman, is moſt commonly remarkable for none of the ſplendid abilities by which the father was diſtinguiſhed; at the ſame time, that we behold him in a contraſted light, which deepens the ſhade of his deficiency. The caſe is different with relation to wealth, which, in the ordinary courſe of things, is tranſmitted, by lineal ſucceſſion, from father to ſon; and remain for many generations in the ſame family. The poſſeſſor of that eſtate, therefore, who

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bears the name, and who exerciſes the powers which belonged to his anceſtors, obtains not only the original means of creating dependence which they enjoyed, but ſeems to inherit, in ſome degree, that conſideration and reſpect, that influence or attachment, which, by their high ſtation, and by the diſtribution of their favours during a long period they were able to accumulate. This is the origin of what is called *birth*, as the foundation of authority, which creates a popular prepoſſeſſion for the repreſentative of an ancient family, giving him the preference to an upſtart, though the latter ſhould poſſeſs greater abilities and virtues.

From the operation of theſe different circumſtances; from the accidental ſuperiority of perſonal qualities, and from the unequal diſtribution of wealth, aided and confirmed by the force of habit, ſyſtems of government have grown up, and been variouſly modified, without exciting any inquiry into their conſequences, and without leading the people to examine th egrounds of their ſubmiſſion to the conſtituted authorities.

2. But

2. But when, in the courſe of political tranſactions, particular perſons groſsly abuſe their powers, or when competitions ariſe among individuals poſſeſſing influence and authority, and of conſequence parties are formed, who eſpouſe the intereſt of the reſpective leaders, the public attention is rouſed to ſcrutinize the pretenſions of the ſeveral candidates, to compare the different modes of government which they may propoſe to introduce, and to examine their title to demand obedience from the reſt of the community.

In ſuch inquiries, it is hardly poſſible to avoid ſuggeſting another principle, more ſatisfactory than that of mere authority; the general *utility* of government; or rather its abſolute neceſſity, for preventing the diſorders incident to human ſociety. Without a ſubordination of ranks, without a power, veſted in ſome men, to controul and direct the behaviour of others, and calculated to produce a ſyſtem of uniform and conſiſtent operations, it is impoſſible that a multitude of perſons, living together, ſhould be induced to reſign their own pri-

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vate intereſt, to ſubdue their oppoſite and jarring paſſions, and regularly to promote the general happineſs.

There are natural rights, which belong to mankind antecedent to the formation of civil ſociety. We may eaſily conceive, that, in a ſtate of nature, we ſhould be entitled to maintain our perſonal ſafety, to exerciſe our natural liberty, ſo far as it does not encroach upon the rights of others; and even to maintain a property in thoſe things which we have come to poſſeſs, by original occupancy, or by our labour in producing them. Theſe rights are not loſt, though they may be differently modified when we enter into ſociety. A part of them, doubtleſs, muſt be reſigned for the ſake of thoſe advantages to be derived from the ſocial ſtate. We muſt reſign, for example, the privilege of avenging injuries, for the advantage of being protected by courts of juſtice. We muſt give up a part of our property, that the public may be enabled to afford that protection. We muſt yield obedience to the legiſlative power, that we may enjoy that good order and tranquillity to be expected from its cool and

diſpaſſionate regulations. But the rights which we reſign, ought, in all theſe caſes, to be compenſated by the advantages obtained; and the reſtraints, or burdens impoſed, ought neither to be greater, nor more numerous, than are neceſſary for the general proſperity and happineſs.

Were we to examine, according to this criterion, the various political ſyſtems which take place in the world, how many might be weighed in the balance and found wanting? Some are defective by too great ſtrictneſs of regulation, confining and hampering natural liberty by minute and trivial reſtraints; more have deviated widely from the purpoſe by too great laxity, admitting, an exceſſive licenſe to the various modifications of knavery and violence; but the greateſt number have almoſt totally failed in producing happineſs or ſecurity, from the tyranny of individuals, or of particular orders and ranks, who, by the accidental concurrence of circumſtances, acquiring exorbitant power, have reduced their fellow-citizens into a ſtate of ſervile ſubjection. It is a mortifying reflection, to obſerve, that,

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while many other branches of knowledge have attained a high degree of maturity, the maſter-piece of ſcience, the guardian of rights, and of every thing valuable, ſhould, in many enlightened parts of the world, ſtill remain in a ſtate of groſs imperfection. Even in countries where the people have made vigorous efforts to meliorate their government, how often has the colluſion of parties, the oppoſite attraction of public and private intereſt, the fermentation of numberleſs diſcordant elements, produced nothing at laſt but a reſidue of deſpotiſm.

It may here be remarked, that, when a political conſtitution is happily conſtructed, it not only excites approbation from the ultimate view of its beneficial tendency, but, like a complex machine, in which various wheels and ſprings are nicely adjuſted, it affords additional pleaſure, from our ſenſe of order and beautiful arrangement. If we are pleaſed with the ſurvey of a well-regulated farm or workhouſe, in which there is nothing ſlovenly or miſplaced, nothing loſt or ſuperfluous, but in which every operation,

tion, and every article of expence, is directed to the beſt advantage, how much greater ſatisfaction muſt we receive, in beholding the ſame regular diſpoſition of parts, the ſame happy adjuſtment of means to a beneficial purpoſe, exhibited in a ſyſtem ſo complicated and extenſive, as to comprehend the moral and political movements of a great nation?

In England, where the attention of the inhabitants has been long directed to ſpeculations of this nature, the two original principles of government, which I have mentioned, were diſtinguiſhed by political writers as far back, at leaſt, as the commencement of the conteſt between the king and the people, upon the acceſſion of the Houſe of Stewart, and were then reſpectively patronized and adopted by the two great parties into which the nation was divided. The principle of *authority* was that of the tories; by which they endeavoured to juſtify the pretenſions of the ſovereign to abſolute power. As the dignity of the monarch excited univerſal reſpect and reverence,

reverence, and as it was not conferred by election, but had been immemorially poſſeſſed by a hereditary title, it was underſtood to be derived from the author of our nature, who has implanted in mankind the ſeeds of loyalty and allegiance. The monarch is, therefore, not accountable to his ſubjects, but only to the Deity, by whom he is appointed; and conſequently his power, ſo far as we are concerned, is abſolute; requiring, on our part, an unlimited paſſive obedience. If guilty of tyranny and oppreſſion, he may be called to an account in the next world, for tranſgreſſing the laws of his Maker; but, in this life, he is totally exempted from all reſtraint or puniſhment; and the people, whom heaven in its anger has viſited with this affliction, have no other reſource than prayers and ſupplications.

The whigs, on the other hand, founded the power of a ſovereign, and of all inferior magiſtrates and rulers, upon the principle of *utility*. They maintained, that as all government is intended for defending the natural rights of mankind, and for promoting the happineſs of human ſociety, every exertion

exertion of power in governors, inconſiſtent with that end, is illegal and criminal; and it is the height of abſurdity to ſuppoſe, that, when an illegal and unwarrantable power is uſurped, the people have no right to reſiſt the exerciſe of it by puniſhing the uſurper. The power of a king is no otherwiſe of Divine appointment than any other event which happens in the diſpoſitions of Providence; and, in the ſhare of government which is devolved upon him, he is no more the vicegerent of God Almighty than any inferior officer, to whom the ſmalleſt or meaneſt branch of adminiſtration is committed.

At the ſame time that the whigs conſidered the good of ſociety as the foundation of our ſubmiſſion to government, they attempted to modify and confirm that principle by the additional principle of *conſent*. As the union of mankind in ſociety is a matter of choice, the particular form of government introduced into any country depends, in like manner, upon the inclination of the inhabitants. According to the general current of popular opinion, they adopt certain political

political arrangements, and ſubmit to different rulers and magiſtrates, either by poſitive regulation and expreſs contracts, or by acting in ſuch a manner as gives room to infer a tacit agreement. As government, therefore, aroſe from a contract, or rather a number of contracts, either expreſſed or implied, among the different members of ſociety, the terms of ſubmiſſion between the governors and the governed, as well as the right of puniſhing either party, upon a violation of thoſe original agreements, may thence be eaſily and clearly aſcertained.

With reſpect to this origin of the duty of allegiance, which has been much inſiſted on by the principal writers in this country, and which has of late been dreſſed and preſented in different ſhapes by politicians on the continent, it ſeems rather to be a peculiar explanation and view of the former principle of utility, than any new or ſeparate ground of our ſubmiſſion to government; and even, when conſidered in this light, it muſt be admitted with ſuch precautions and limitations, that very little advantage is gained by it.

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The obligation of a contract is liable in all cases, to be controuled and modified by considerations of general utility; and a promise inconsistent with any great interest of society is not productive of moral obligation. In reality, men, when they come into society, are bound to preserve the natural rights of one another; and, consequently, to establish a government conducive to that end. Good government is necessary to prevent robbery, murder, and oppression; and if a man be supposed to have promised, that he would support or obey a government of an opposite tendency, it would be his duty to break such an illegal compact, and to reform such an unjust constitution.

The addition of a promise, at the same time, appears but little to increase the weight of that previous obligation. The obligation to abstain from murder, receives but little additional strength by our giving a promise to that effect.

It seems, indeed, to be a maxim universally admitted, that every nation is entitled to regulate its own government; but this proceeds

proceeds upon the preſumption that every nation is the beſt judge of what is expedient in its peculiar circumſtances, and is likely to receive moſt benefit from that peculiar conſtitution which is introduced by the voice of the majority. The maxim, therefore, muſt be underſtood with exception of ſuch political arrangements as are evidently tyrannical, and is applicable to ſuch forms of government only, as in point of expediency, admit of different opinions.

It is underſtood, on the other hand, that no foreign ſtate is entitled to controul or reſtrain its neighbours, in modelling and eſtabliſhing their own political ſyſtem; becauſe, whatever pretences for ſuch interference may be aſſumed, it never is dictated by a benevolent purpoſe, but commonly proceeds from ſelfiſh and ſiniſter motives. As different ſtates have always a ſeparate, and very frequently an oppoſite intereſt, it muſt be expected that each will invariably purſue its own; and that, in ſeeking to aggrandize itſelf, the conſtant object of its policy, whether profeſſed or concealed, will be to limit the power, and prevent the aggran-

aggrandizement of its neighbours. There could not, therefore, exiſt a more fatal calamity to any country, than that its adminiſtration and government ſhould be ſettled under the direction of its neighbours.

There occur, at the ſame time, a variety of circumſtances, in which it ſhould ſeem, that the inhabitants of a country, by living under the protection of its laws, give no good reaſon to infer a tacit promiſe of ſubmiſſion to its government.

It would be abſurd to ſuppoſe, that the inhabitants of Turkey have given a free conſent to ſupport that government under which they live. Even in other countries, leſs benumbed with ignorance and ſtupidity, or ſunk in the lethargy of deſpotiſm, a great part of the inhabitants feel themſelves under a ſort of neceſſity to remain, where the language and habits of life are familiar to them, where they enjoy the comfortable intercourſe of their friends, and where they have already ſecured the regular means of ſubſiſtence. Their ſubmiſſion to the government is, therefore, extorted by the proſpect of thoſe inconveniences which would attend

their

their emigration; and if it were at all to be regarded in the light of a promiſe, would be ſuch a one as ought to be ſet aſide from equitable conſiderations.

When we examine hiſtorically the extent of the tory, and of the whig principle, it ſeems evident, that from the progreſs of arts and commerce, the former has been continually diminiſhing, and the latter gaining ground in the ſame proportion. In England, ſo late as the year 1688—

"The right divine of kings to govern ill,"

was a doctrine ſtill embraced in general by the landed gentry, by the church, and by a great part of the nation; and had it not been for the terror of popery, the revolution at that time would not have taken place. Since that period, however, there has been a gradual progreſs of opinions. Philoſophy has been conſtantly advancing in all the departments of ſcience; has been employed in reducing all the works of art, all the appearances of nature, to their principles; and has not neglected to puſh her reſearches into political, as well as other branches of ſpeculation.

lation. The myſteries of government have been more and more unveiled; and the circumſtances which contribute to the perfection of the ſocial order have been laid open The degrees of power committed to individuals, have been placed on their proper baſis; and the chief magiſtrate, when ſtript of his artificial trappings, and when the miſt of prepoſſeſſion which had ſurrounded him is diſpelled, appears naked, and without diſguiſe, the real ſervant of the people, appointed for the important purpoſe of ſuperintending, and putting in motion the great political machine. The blind reſpect and reverence paid to ancient inſtitutions has given place to a deſire of examining their uſes, of criticiſing ther defects, and of appreciating their true merits. The faſhion of ſcrutinizing public meaſures, according to the ſtandard of their utility, has now become very univerſal; it pervades the literary circles, together with a great part of the middling ranks, and is viſibly deſcending to the lower orders of the people.

During the rebellion in 1745, a gentleman of ſome eminence, who had embarked

in that ridiculous project, is ſaid to have diſtinguiſhed himſelf, by defending the meaſure upon what were called whig principles. This was, at that time regarded as a novelty, and was far from being well received by his aſſociates; but ſo great has been the progreſs of opinion ſince that period, that the more liberal part of the tories have now caught univerſally the mode of reaſoning employed by their adverſaries, and are accuſtomed to juſtify the degree of monarchical power which they wiſh to eſtabliſh, not by aſſerting that it is the inherent birthright of the ſovereign, but by maintaining that it is neceſſary for the ſuppreſſion of tumult and diſorder.

Even that hardy race, who formerly iſſued from their mountains to attack him whom they conſidered as the uſurper of the throne, are long ſince fully reconciled to the beneficial government of a German elector, raiſed by an act of parliament to the ſovereignty of a free people*.

* See Addiſon's verſes to Sir Godfrey Kneller.

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The whigs themſelves have not been exempted from the progreſſive operation of the ſame circumſtances, which have gradually exalted their ſpeculative principles, and occaſioned a proportional change in their practical ſyſtem. It cannot be overlooked, that the diſpoſition to pry into the abuſes of government is likely to ſuggeſt limitations in the power of rulers; and when a people at large employ themſelves in diſcuſſing the advantages ariſing from different political arrangements, they muſt feel a bias in favour of that ſyſtem, which tends to the equalization of ranks, and the diffuſion of popular privileges*.

The deſpotiſm, which had long been deeply rooted upon the neighbouring continent, checked the progreſs of political ſpeculation, and taught the people, not only to ſuffer, but even to exult in their fetters.

* Hence the diſtinction between the *old* and the *new* whigs, by which a famous political character endeavoured lately to cover the deſertion of his former tenets; and hence too a pretty general ſuſpicion, that many nominal adherents of that party have become ſecret admirers of democracy.

Philoſophy, however, triumphed at length over ancient cuſtoms; and the light of ſcience, which had long been diffuſed in every other department, diſcovered the rights of man, and the true principles of government. The nation awoke, as from a dream of horror and diſtreſs. Their enthuſiaſm in correcting abuſes and in propagating the new ſyſtem, roſe to a height proportioned to the dnger wh ich they had eſcaped, and the obſtacles which they had to ſurmount. It bore down all oppoſition; it ſwept away thoſe corrupt inſtitutions which had been the work of ages; it levelled with the duſt thoſe bulwarks which avarice and ambition had erected for maintaining their encroachments; but unhappily, in the general wreck of opinions, it overthrew thoſe banks and landmarks, which while they defended the civil rights of the inhabitants, might have contributed to direct and regulate the new eſtabliſhment.

It ſeems worthy of remark, that when the new ſyſtem in France appeared likely to ſpread over the reſt of Europe, the alarm and panic which it ſtruck among the inhabitants

habitants of this country, was chiefly excited by a proſpect of the dangers with which then were threatened, and the arguments employed in oppoſing and combating that ſyſtem, were drawn entirely from the anarchy and confuſion, the deſtruction of all rights and liberties, religious and civil, with which it would be attended; and the chief alarmiſts were taken from that claſs of men who had been denominated whigs.

Upon the whole, it is evident that the diffuſion of knowledge tends more and more, to encourage and bring forward the principle of utility in all political diſcuſſions; but we muſt not thence conclude that the influence of mere authority, operating without reflection, is entirely uſeleſs. From the diſpoſitions of mankind to pay reſpect and ſubmiſſion to ſuperior perſonal qualities, and ſtill more to a ſuperiority of rank and ſtation, together with that propenſity which every one feels to continue in thoſe modes of action to which he has long been accuſtomed, the great body of the people, who have commonly neither leiſure nor capacity to weigh the advantages of public regulations, are pre-

prevented from indulging their unruly paſſions, and retained in ſubjection to the magiſtrate. The ſame diſpoſitions contribute in ſome degree to reſtrain thoſe raſh and viſionary projects, which proceed from the ambition of ſtateſmen, or the wanton deſire of innovation, and by which nations are expoſed to the moſt dreadful calamities. Thoſe feelings of the human mind, which give riſe to authority, may be regarded as the wiſe proviſion of nature for ſupporting the order and government of ſociety; and they are only to be regretted and cenſured, when, by exceeding their proper bounds, they no longer act in ſubordination to the good of mankind, but are made, as happens, indeed, very often, the inſtruments of tyranny and oppreſſion.

CHAP-

CHAPTER. VIII.

The gradual Advancement of the Fine Arts— Their Influence upon Government.

THE diverſions and amuſements of any people are uſually conformable to the progreſs they have made in the common arts of life. Barbarians, who are much employed in fighting, and are obliged to procure ſubſiſtence, as well as to defend their acquiſitions, by vigorous corporeal exertions, amuſe themſelves with mock fights, and with ſuch contentions as diſplay their ſtrength, agility, and courage. Long after mankind have made ſuch advances in rearing cattle, and in agriculture, as to derive their principal maintenance from thoſe arts, they continue to follow hunting and fiſhing, with all the varieties of rural ſport, as their chief recreation and paſtime. But when, in conſequence of their improvement in uſeful arts, the bulk of a people are engaged in peaceable profeſſions, and from their

their advancement in opulence and civilization, have become averſe from hazardous exertions, and deſirous of repoſe and tranquillity, it may be expected that a ſuitable variation will take place in the ſtyle of their amuſements. Inſtead of engaging in the athletic exerciſes, they will hire others to exhibit ſpectacles of that nature, and will become ſedentary ſpectators of the ſtruggle. Or if they have attained a higher degree of refinement, they will invent games which admit the diſplay of mental addreſs and ingenuity; and will at length introduce entertainments calculated to gratify the taſte of whatever is beautiful in the compaſs of art or of nature. In ſome countries, no doubt, accidental circumſtances have retarded the improvement of theſe elegant pleaſures, and preſerved, in the midſt of opulence and civilization, an uncommon attachment to the primitive amuſements of a rude age. The Romans, in conſequence of early and deep impreſſions which they had received from their long and conſtant employment in war, were diſgraced, even at the moſt exalted period of their philoſophy and literature,

ture, by the fondneſs which they retained for the barbarous exhibitions of the amphitheatre. The inhabitants of this iſland, among whom the lower orders have conſiderable influence in directing the faſhions, have incurred the ridicule of their neighbours, for their ſtrong partiality to the inelegant amuſements of the cock-pit, and the bear-garden. But whatever exceptions may occur in particular caſes, it is commonly obſerved, that the refinements of taſte, and the cultivation of the elegant arts, among a people, are in proportion to thoſe improvements which multiply the comforts and conveniencies of life, and give riſe to extenſive affluence and luxury.

That the degree of barbariſm, or of refinement, in this particular, which happens to prevail in a country, muſt have a powerful effect upon the character and manners of the inhabitants, will be readily admitted, when we conſider what a large proportion of time is frequently ſpent in amuſements and diverſions; what a multiplicity of ideas theſe are capable of ſuggeſting; and what a deep impreſſion they make, more eſpecially in

in the higher ranks, and in the early periods of life!

In examining, therefore, the improvements which have taken place, in this country, ſince the revolution, it would be improper to overlook that progreſſive culture of the fine arts which has been ſo conſpicuous, and from which the inhabitants of the higher, and even middling ranks, derive ſo great a ſhare of their amuſement. Upon this ſubject, I ſhall throw together a few obſervations, concerning the hiſtory of theſe arts, and concerning their influence upon the government of a people; beginning with that extenſive branch which is communicated by language, or literary compoſition. This may be divided into two claſſes: the firſt comprehending thoſe compoſitions which are primarily calculated for mere entertainment, and to which, in a large ſenſe, the denomination of *poetry* may be given: the ſecond, including thoſe in which entertainment is but a ſecondary object, and which may come under the general deſcription of *eloquence*.

SECTION

SECTION I.

Of Poetry; or thoſe Compoſitions which are primarily calculated for mere Entertainment.

WE find that from the original conſtitution of our nature, we derive pleaſure from the utterance of certain meaſured and modulated ſounds; and are ſtill more delighted when by the contrivance of language, theſe pleaſing ſounds are made to repreſent or convey the ideas or images of former ſenſations. Theſe two ſources of pleaſure, the melody of ſounds, and the agreeable repreſentation of ideas or images by words, concur in ſinging, which, with the accompaniment of dancing, conſtitutes one of the great amuſements of early nations.

A ſong contains the rudiments of poetry and muſic, two arts, which, in a ſtate of extreme ſimplicity, are commonly united. But when the muſician on the one hand has invented

invented a rich and varied melody, and the poet, on the other hand has acquired ſo much experience and knowledge as to introduce a long and intricate ſeries of thoughts, it is no longer poſſible to enjoy at once the reſult of their different improvements, and it becomes neceſſary that the two arts ſhould be ſeparated. The conſequence of that ſeparation is the ſuperior cultivation and improvement of each, with regard to all thoſe effects which they are ſeparately capable of producing. As muſic is thus gradually rendered more intricate, and of more difficult execution, the mechanical part of it requires a longer and more intenſe application for acquiring a proficiency in the performance, and ſurpaſſing more and more the patience and perſeverance of the ordinary gentleman performer, is at length abandoned in a great meaſure to the mere artiſt, who follows that profeſſion for hire; while poetry, of which the mechaniſm is more ſimple and eaſy, and in which the powers of imagination are leſs confined in the trammels of art, becomes not ſo much a profeſſional object as the occaſional

nal exercise of all those persons to whom inclination or genius happens to recommend that species of amusement.

The pleasure which poetry affords appears to arise primarily from the representation of those natural objects which are great, new, or unexpected, and which are fitted to excite admiration, wonder, and surprise. These emotions are produced in us, not only from the nature of the objects represented, but still more from the mode of representation, which through the surprising medium of language, by an operation like that of enchantment, conveys an exact and lively image of every possible existence.

That admiration, wonder, and surprise, are agreeable feelings, which in different shapes and directions, become the source of a delightful occupation to the mind, is consistent with universal experience. The impressions of admiration are the deepest and most violent. Those of wonder and surprise, are slighter and more transient, but in return, they are more numerous and varied, more susceptible of different forms and modifications,

difications, and enter more intimately into the ordinary train of our ideas and amuſements.

The images communicated by the poet may relate either to external nature or to the paſſions and operations of the mind. The former are agreeable from the circumſtances already ſuggeſted. But the latter afford a ſeparate pleaſure, which is frequently of much higher importance. When the paſſions and ſentiments of our fellow-creatures correſpond with our own, they excite that pleaſing ſympathy which is the great ſource of benevolence and friendſhip; when they are on the other hand, remarkably contraſted with our own feelings, they contribute, in ſome caſes, to our entertainment, by provoking ridicule, and exciting the grateful ſenſation of laughter.

PART I.

Of Epic Poetry; *or what is related by the Poet in his own Perſon.*

THOUGH the imagery ariſing from views of external nature, is unavoidably blended with that which ſprings from the repreſentation of human ſentiment, they have given riſe to two different forms of poetical compoſition, more peculiarly adapted to the one or the other, the epic and the dramatic. The former in which the incidents are conſtantly related by the poet himſelf, and are thus thrown into a ſort of ſhade and diſtance, favourable to the exaggerating emotions of admiration, wonder, and ſurpriſe, is peculiarly ſuited to the deſcription of external nature. The latter, in which events are not ſuppoſed to be communicated by the intervention of the poet, but to paſs in the immediate preſence of the ſpectator, is better calculated to produce that vivacity of colouring, and that viſionary conception of reality,

reality, without which it is impoſſible to awaken our ſympathetic affections.

The ſublime genius of epic poetry is peculiarly favoured by the manners of that rude and barbarous period which precedes the cultivation of the common arts of life. In proportion as men are ignorant and deſtitute of civilization, they are the more liable to be impreſſed with admiration, wonder, and ſurpriſe; and the more likely, though without ſkill or management, to communicate thoſe feelings in their genuine ſimplicity and force. They are in a world where almoſt every thing is new and unaccountable, and where their obſervation is confined to a ſmall number of objects. The great ſcenes of nature are ſpread before them, and ſucceſſively recur in all the various forms which they aſſume in different ſeaſons and ſituations. Theſe, dwelling upon the imagination of the uninſtructed beholder, and ſurveyed in a variety of aſpects, preſent new and ſtricking images of grandeur and terror, of contraſt, and of reſemblance, of unknown cauſes, magnified and miſconceived by fear,

or

or of ſtrange and unexpected events, miſrepreſented by deluſive prepoſſeſſion. At the approaching light of knowledge, theſe wonders diſappear; the gigantic vaniſhes; and the multiplied purſuits of ſociety render mankind acquainted with the new, familiar with the great, and converſant in the minute parts of nature. Their poetic imagery of courſe changes its character, and loſing its enthuſiaſtic ardour, ſinks gradually into the temper of cool thought and reflection.

In the oriental poetry of a remote period, which is handed down to us, we diſcover evident proofs of that peculiar ſtyle and manner, by which the poetry of a rude people appears to be diſtinguiſhed. Great force of conception, with little taſte or judgment in the diſtribution of parts: a few features, boldly delineated, without ſkill or perſeverance to finiſh the picture: grand and ſublime images, looſely combined, and often ill aſſerted: compariſons far-fetched, but lofty and magnificent; with ſtrong, but harſh metaphors, frequently broken and inconſiſtent; and with language highly figurative rather from a penury of

appropriated expreſſion, than from exuberance of fancy, and therefore, in many caſes, hyperbolical and uncouth.

The ſame character of ſublimity may be recogniſed in thoſe relicts of Celtic poetry, aſcribed to Oſſian; which no credulity can believe to be an entire forgery of the publiſher; but from which we may eaſily ſuppoſe that he has removed a great part of their original imperfections.

That the ſublime genius of Homer was greatly indebted to the character of the age in which he lived, will readily be admitted; but the difficulty lies in conceiving, by what means, in ſo rude an age, he could acquire that correctneſs of taſte and judgment for which he is ſo conſpicuous. What an aſtoniſhing phenomenon is the Iliad, if we ſurvey the extenſive and regular plan upon which it is compoſed, the ſkill and experience with which it is executed, together with the purity of expreſſion, and the harmony of numbers, which every where prevail in that immortal work; and if, at the ſame time, we conſider that the author muſt have lived before the return of the Heraclidæ into Peloponeſus otherwiſe

otherwiſe he would undoubtedly have made ſome alluſion to that event of ſo much importance to all Greece; that is, he muſt have lived within eighty years of the Trojan war, when the art of writing was hardly known to the Greeks, and more than three hundred years before their oldeſt proſe-writer, of whom we have any accounts! How much more advanced was the ſtate of arts and ſciences in England during the life of Spenſer than in Greece, during the period when Homer is underſtood to have lived; but how obſolete is the language of the former compared with that of the latter? If we conſider the chronology of Homer's life to be ſufficiently eſtabliſhed, one would be tempted to believe that his rhapſodies, as they were called, have not only been arranged and digeſted in a ſubſequent period, as has been aſſerted upon good authority, but have even undergone ſomething ſimilar to the *refacciamento*, by Berni, of Bogardos *Orlando*.

The improvement of poetry as an art, ſo far as it depends upon culture and experience, is naturally progreſſive; but when this art has attained a certain degree of perfec-

tion, like all others derived from the mere exerciſe of imagination, it is rendered ſtationary; after which it begins to decline, and haſtens to its final extinction, while the impreſſions of the poet are weakened by the progreſs of knowledge, and by a familiar acquaintance with the objects of nature, his powers are, doubtleſs, in another view, increaſed by ſtoring his mind with a greater number of ideas, by collecting and combining a greater diverſity of images and events, and by the capacity he acquires of arranging and diſpoſing them to the beſt advantage. The poetry of rude nations conſiſts of ſeparate lineaments, and of unconnected incidents; but from the natural advancement of the art, in a civilized and refined age, theſe disjointed members are united in a regular ſyſtem, and produce a finiſhed performance. The volume of nature is expanded; the range of imagination is enlarged; the diſcrimination of what is intereſting and agreeable is improved; and by the union and co-operation of many beautiful parts, the mind is detained in a labyrinth of pleaſing emotions. But in proportion

portion to the degree of excellence that has been attained, the ſtandard of perfection is exalted; and the readers of poetry, tired with the repetition of ſimilar objects and exhibitions, become ſevere and faſtidious critics, quick and expert in diſcovering and cenſuring blemiſhes. Conſcious, therefore, of what is expected, every ſucceeding candidate for fame muſt endeavour to ſurpaſs his predeceſſors by new images or combinations; by adorning each part with a greater accumulation of beauties, and by enriching the whole with a greater variety of parts. But there is a certain point beyond which the progreſs of embelliſhment ceaſes to be agreeable, and more is loſt by deviation from ſimplicity than is gained by additional decoration. By crowding together a number, even of beautiful objects, the impreſſion of each is diminiſhed, the attention is diſſipated in a multiplicity of particulars, and the general effect is proportionably impaired. By exceſſive ornament, the figures appear loaded with artificial trappings; and the piece becomes gaudy and inelegant. The more intereſting and genuine appearances

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of nature are, at the ſame time exhauſted; and it becomes neceſſary to ſubſtitute others of inferior value. The grand and the ſublime are deſerted in the purſuit of mere novelty and variety; and a corrupted taſte becomes more habituated to factitious and ſophiſticated embelliſhments. Deſpairing to rival the models of a former period, the followers of the muſes are at length induced to abandon the higher flights of imagination, and ſteering, without hazard, in a level and equable courſe, are content with the humbler attainments of ſmooth verſification, and pointed expreſſion; with figurative language, coined and carefully collected from every quarter; in a word, with proſaic tameneſs and languor, arrayed according to the faſhion of the times, in a pompous artificial diction. In this declining ſtate of poetry, it becomes a natural improvement, to throw aſide the mechaniſm of verſe, and in more natural and eaſy expreſſion, to exhibit ſuch pictures of life and manners as are calculated to pleaſe the underſtanding, and to intereſt the paſſions. Compoſitions of this nature, which, conſidering that their chief

chief object is mere entertainment, may be called poetical, are capable of being extended and diverſified without end; and they ſeem peculiarly adapted to that combined exerciſe of the imagination and judgment which is agreeable to a refined and philoſophical age.

Theſe obſervations are confirmed by the hiſtory of all thoſe nations who have made progreſs in the arts, and in polite literature. The ſublimity of the poetical genius among the early Greeks, not only in what is commonly called epic poetry, but in the ſerious compoſitions intended for the accompaniment of muſic, has been univerſally acknowledged; and its decline in the later periods, after it had riſen to a high degree of eminence, is not leſs conſpicuous.

When the poetical talent, from deſpair of equalling the models already exhibited, and from the corruption of taſte produced by the inceſſant ſtudy of novelty and variety, has been extinguiſhed in one country, it is not likely, ever after, to revive among the ſame people; but it may eaſily be introduced into another country, where the ſame

ſame natural beauties, not yet faded by time, are ſtill freſh and agreeable; and where thoſe images and deſcriptions, which had become tireſome by repetition, aſſume, when imitated in a different language, a new and intereſting appearance, and may even acquire, in ſome degree, an air of originality. Thus the Roman poets, towards the end of the commonwealth, and about the beginning of the deſpotiſm, roſe to high reputation by a judicious imitation of the Greek writers; though, in the latter period, the career of Roman poetry was very ſimilar to that of the Grecian; with this difference, that, as the Roman government laſted longer, it afforded more time to mark the ſteps of deſcending genius, and thoſe affectations which the growing corruption of taſte had a tendency to produce.

When the nations of modern Europe, after a long interval of deſolation and diſorder, had begun to enjoy peace and tranquillity, and acquired ſome degree of opulence, they applied themſelves to the arts of entertainment, and imitated with ſucceſs the poetical compoſitions of the

Greeks

Greeks and Romans. Their attempts of this nature were, however, peculiarly modified by two circumſtances.

In imitating the Greek and Roman writers, they at firſt preferred the affected brilliancy, and tinſel ornaments of a later age, to the ſimple and genuine beauties of the preceding period. Though, in the infancy of the fine arts, mankind, as has been remarked by Mr. Hume, when left without direction or inſtruction, will commonly follow the dictates of nature and truth; and, in their compoſitions, will endeavour to expreſs their thoughts with plainneſs and ſimplicity, yet they are eaſily miſled by falſe guides, and have too little experience and taſte to reject the gaudy and affected embelliſhments of a vitiated ſtyle. From this injudicious imitation of ancient models, the firſt poetical compoſitions of modern Italy, and of other European countries, exhibited all thoſe defects which are uſual in a declining ſtate of the fine arts. The tendency, however, of ſubſequent improvements, was not only to produce that correctneſs which is derived from obſervation,

tion, and from rules of criticiſm, but to reſtore that ſimplicity which is commonly the peculiar character of early compoſitions.

The Gothic manners, on the other hand, by introducing ſuch romantic love, and ſuch exalted notions of military honour, as were unknown to the Greeks and Romans, afforded a new and rich field for the diſplay of heroic ſentiments, and of ſtriking adventures. The admiration and gallantry of which, in the age of chivalry, the ladies were uniformly the objects, and the humanity and generoſity, with which all thoſe gentlemen, who had acquired diſtinction in arms, thought it incumbent on them to behave towards one another, furniſh a remarkable contraſt with the ſpirit and behaviour of the principal perſonages in the Iliad; where a country is praiſed, in the ſame breath, for producing fine horſes and beautiful women; and where Hector, who firſt runs away from Achilles, is afterwards dragged at the chariot wheels of that brutal conqueror. The advantages, however, derived from this modern refinement, were ſo counteracted by the falſe taſte which prevailed,

vailed, as to render the poetical compoſitions, which appeared upon the revival of letters, a ſet of motley performances, not leſs diſgraced by childiſh and extravagant conceits, than they were often diſtinguiſhed by uncommon ſtrength of imagery and wildneſs of imagination. The Italian poets, who ſet the example to all Europe, were moſt remarkable both for the beauties and the defects which have been mentioned; though, in the courſe of near two centuries, when they continued to flouriſh, they ſeem to have availed themſelves more and more of an acquaintance with the purer claſſics of Greece and Rome. The French, who, after the ſtates of Italy, came next into the ſituation of a poliſhed people, appear to have turned their chief attention to ſupply the defect which was moſt wanting in the Italian poets, by ſubſtituting order, method, and regularity; and, as every new attempt is commonly puſhed into extremities the exuberance of imagination in the latter gave riſe, in the former, to exceſſive reſtraints, to a rigid obſervance of critical rules, and to feeble and languid compoſitions. In England,

England, the progreſs of civilization was much later than in France; and as the people, for this reaſon, advanced more ſlowly in their ideas of correctneſs, the poets did not abandon the Italian models until, by the force of cuſtom, and by the practice of ſeveral eminent writers, the national taſte was invariably fixed and determined. The irregularity and bold imagery of Spenſer, and the ſublime genius of Milton, not to mention our great writer in the dramatic walk, who has no pretenſions to correctneſs, have given a peculiar bias to the poetical taſte of Engliſhmen, and directed their admiration almoſt excluſively to the powers of invention and fancy.

In all theſe European countries however, it ſhould ſeem, that the poetic ſpirit has greatly declined, and that in two of them it is almoſt extinct. In Italy, the Gieruſalemmé Liberata may be accounted the laſt great exertion of the epic muſe. In France, the Henriade of Voltaire, which is, in that country, the moſt conſiderable poem of the ſame claſs, appears, notwithſtanding the cele-

celebrity of its author, to have ſunk into the ſhade.

That in England too, epic poetry is already long paſt its ſummit, and has been declining for more than half a century, will, from the ſlighteſt examination, appear abundantly evident. The late adventurers in this field diſcover, indeed, few marks of a corrupted taſte; but they ſeem greatly inferior to their predeceſſors, in original genius, in fertility of invention, and in richneſs of imagery. They are a ſort of minor poets, deſtitute of that creative power which enlivens every object, and without effort converts all nature to their purpoſes; but ſtraining to be ſublime, tiring their fancy by endleſs and rapid excurſions to the moſt remote and oppoſite corners of the univerſe, painfully collecting and ſkilfully appropriating the labours of preceding authors, and after all producing, at beſt, a few fragments of beautiful paſſages.

In reality, conſidering the ſtate of ſociety at preſent, both in France and England, it may be doubted, whether an epic poem, of great length, and highly finiſhed in all its parts,

parts, embelliſhed with the harmony of verſification, and the ſplendour of diction, and enriched with metaphors and figures of all ſorts, be an entertainment ſuited to the general taſte of the people. It ſhould ſeem, that a ſhort compoſition of this nature may give a delightful exerciſe to the imagination; but that a long work becomes tedious, and demands from the reader an alertneſs, and intenſity of application, which few perſons are capable of maintaining. We find, accordingly, that the modern novels, which, in a plainer ſtyle, comprehend a wider field of adventures, have now, in great meaſure, ſuperſeded the ancient modes of epic poetry, and become the chief amuſement of almoſt all thoſe individuals who are exempted from bodily labour. The multiplication of theſe compoſitions, which were ſcarcely known to the Greeks and Romans, and their endleſs diverſity of ſhapes, whether ſerious or comic, in which they have appeared, may be regarded as one of the great varieties in the hiſtory of polite literature.

PART II.

Of Dramatic Poetry.

DRAMATIC performances are, in all countries, of a later origin than epic. It is a more natural and obvious thought, that one ſhould expreſs his own ideas and ſentiments, than that, by means of actors, or repreſentatives, he ſhould endeavour to communicate the ideas and ſentiments of others. The latter ſuppoſes two very difficult, and, in ſome degree, inconſiſtent operations: Firſt, that, by the warmth of ſympathetic emotion, a man ſhould enter ſo completely into the mind of others, as to conceive in what manner they will be affected on any particular occaſion; and, in the ſecond place, that he ſhould diſtinguiſh and diſcriminate ſo nicely their peculiar feelings and affections, as never to confound them with his own. The exhibition of dramatic repreſentations is, at the ſame time, attended with an expence, which may ſuit the circumſtances

cumſtances of an opulent nation, but in which a rude people have neither the inclination nor the capacity to indulge.

This obſervation is confirmed both by the ancient and modern hiſtory of the drama. Sophocles and Euripides, among the Greeks, as well as Menander, and the other writers of the new comedy, flouriſhed at the time of the higheſt Athenian opulence and poliſheneſs. The Romans, indeed, in a ruder age, appear to have made conſiderable exertions in comedy; but they were little more than mere tranſlators from the Greeks, and imported thoſe foreign productions when the ſtate of Rome did not permit the rearing of them at home. The Roman taſte began to degenerate before there was leiſure for much internal improvement in theatrical repreſentations. This was likewiſe the fate of modern Italy. In France, the flouriſhing ſtate of the theatre was not prior to the age of Lewis XIV.; nor in England to that of William III.

With reſpect to *tragedy* in particular, of which the great object is to excite compaſſion, by a diſplay of the natural feelings of

diſtreſs, we may remark, that its improvement has been chiefly retarded from the difficulty of ſeparating the ideas and ſentiments, proper to the perſons introduced, from thoſe of the poet himſelf. To that ſource we may trace the moſt conſpicuous blemiſhes which are diſcernible in this kind of compoſition.

In a dramatic repreſentation, though the incidents are in reality intended to paſs before a ſet of ſpectators, they are ſuppoſed to be carried on without any witneſſes. But this fundamental ſuppoſition the poet is frequently tempted to overlook, by making the perſons of the drama explain to the audience thoſe parts of the plot which he finds himſelf unable otherwiſe to communicate. This indirect addreſs to the ſpectators is to be met with, leſs or more, in the beſt tragedies of every country; but, in the infancy of the drama, a great part of the plot is unfolded in that manner. In the fragments of a Chineſe tragedy, publiſhed by Du Halde, every perſon informs the ſpectators who he is, what he has done, and what he intends to do. In the tragedies of

of Euripides, the author generally ſuperſedes the neceſſity of this, by employing ſome deity, or intelligent perſon, at the outſet of the performance, to give the audience a full account of whatever is to happen. As, in the regular compoſitions of modern Europe, this clumſy contrivance is totally rejected; the information of this nature which they ſometimes contain, appears to eſcape the writer from mere inadvertence, and from his confounding, in ſome meaſure, his own ſituation and views with thoſe of the perſons whom he exhibits.

From a ſimilar inadvertence, we may account for thoſe formal and ſet ſpeeches, of unnatural, and apparently meaſured length, which abound in our moſt correct tragedies. In the conduct of his plot, the poet has occaſion to introduce a certain train of ideas and ſentiments, but, loſing ſight of the characters to whom they ſhould be appropriated, he becomes himſelf the ſpeaker, and endeavouring to do full juſtice to his friends, is anxious that they ſhould omit no topic which the occaſion may ſuggeſt. Hence, inſtead of the natural

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turns of converſation, with ſuch various and ſudden reciprocations of dialogue, as frequently occur in real life, the piece is loaded with verboſe and tedious harangues, reſembling the declamatory pleadings of hireling orators. It is wonderful, how univerſally this unnatural ſtyle has become prevalent both in France and England, and how much the influence of cuſtom has prevented even the moſt faſtidious critics from being diſguſted with it.

Theſe defects are ſo groſs and palpable, that they might eaſily be avoided; but there is another, derived from the ſame ſource, where the difficulty appears much greater. The perſon who is violently affected by any particular event, is apt to feel and act very differently from another who is merely a witneſs of his ſituation and emotions; and the paſſions excited in the former may not only be diſſimilar, but often perfectly repugnant, to thoſe which are produced in the latter. Thus, he who is under the dominion of anger, or of reſentment, gives way to the boiſterous expreſſion of thoſe paſſions, while the ſpectators may be affected

with apprehenſion or diſguſt; and he who is inſtigated, by avarice or ambition, to commit an act of injuſtice, is probably buoyed up with the immediate proſpect of gratifying his deſires, and diſpoſed to palliate or juſtify the meaſure; while thoſe who behold the commiſſion of the crime, are likely to feel indignation, hatred, or contempt. When a poet, therefore, endeavours to repreſent the behaviour of his dramatic perſonages, he muſt, by an effort of imagination, enter, as it were, into their ſituation, in order to conceive the feelings that are ſuited to their character and circumſtances. It is extremely difficult, however, to remain in this artificial ſtation, and ſteadily to retain that view of things which it is calculated to preſent. His own ſituation inceſſantly obtrudes itſelf upon him, and ſhifting the viſionary ſcene, diſpoſes him to regard the ſeveral incidents through the medium of a by-ſtander. Thus the perſons exhibited in tragedy, inſtead of expreſſing the paſſions natural to their ſituation, are made to deſcribe thoſe paſſions, to explain their various appearances, to

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point out the movements which they have a tendency to produce, to moralize upon their conſequences; in a word, to become a ſort of ſpectators of their own conduct.

The imperfections and blemiſhes in this reſpect, which occur in the beſt dramatic performances, are innumerable. Few poets appear to have conceived the idea of avoiding them; but the immortal Shakeſpear, from the mere force of his genius, has done ſo more ſucceſsfully than any other writer, ancient or modern; and it is this circumſtance alone, which, in the midſt of a thouſand irregularities and defects, forms the great ſuperiority of his dramas.

To the difficulties which are unavoidable in dramatical compoſitions, there was added, in modern Europe, another, from thoſe forms of verſification which faſhion had introduced and eſtabliſhed. The melody ariſing from the recurrence of ſimilar ſounds, with which modern ears were peculiarly delighted, gave birth, firſt of all, to the *ſtanza*, which became faſhionable in Italy, and in thoſe other European nations who made any progreſs in the fine arts. But the

the intricacy of this meaſure was found ſo inconſiſtent with the form of dialogue required in dramatic writings, that in theſe it was abandoned, and gave place to a more manageable kind of verſe, by the regular adoption of couplet-rhymes. Even this verſification, however, according to the mode which it aſſumed, more eſpecially in France, with a pauſe conſtantly in the middle of each line, with alternate male and female couplets, and with the indiſpenſible requiſite, that every ſpeaker ſhall finiſh the verſe left incomplete by his predeceſſor, proved a conſiderable incumbrance to the poet, and, by demanding ſo much attention to the mere form of expreſſion, exhauſted, in ſome degree, that vigour which ought to be employed in the more important parts of the compoſition. To write good verſes came thus to be held a diſtinct ſpecies of excellence, capable of compenſating, in many caſes, and even concealing the poverty of the matter contained in them; and an artificial diction, like the gait of a man walking upon ſtilts, was preferred to the plain

plain eaſy movements of a more natural expreſſion.

The Engliſh, among whom a critical taſte in poetry advanced more ſlowly than in France, and who began to ſtudy the art at a period when old prejudices were more diſſipated by the light of knowledge, were leſs attached to the Gothic beauty of rhyme; and in tragedy, as well as in other kinds of poetical compoſition, were led to indulge themſelves in a ſpecies of verſe which admitted greater freedom and variety. The fortunate example of an Italian writer, which, in a ſhort time, found a ſucceſsful imitator in England, delivered the dramatic poets of this country from the fetters of the rhyming couplet, and introduced the meaſure of blank verſe, which is at once capable of approaching the looſeneſs and facility of proſe, and of being adapted to the moſt exalted and heroic ſentiments. The conſequences were ſuch as might be expected; and if the Engliſh writers of tragedy have been commonly more happy than their neighbours upon the Continent, in delineating the ſimple and genuine feelings of the human

human heart, it may be attributed more to the convenient mode of their verſification than to any other circumſtance.

Their merit in this reſpect has alſo taught their countrymen to diſtinguiſh and to admire this particular excellence, and to undervalue any other where this is wanting. It ſhould ſeem, therefore, that in this inſtance, the ſtandard of taſte, in France and in Britain, has become remarkably different; and to thoſe who adopt the one or the other, it appears equally inconceivable that the merit of Racine and of Shakeſpear ſhould admit of a compariſon. Voltaire obſerves, that the queſtion is decided by the other countries of Europe, who may be conſidered as impartial, and who unanimouſly give the preference to Racine. But French literature is better underſtood through the greater part of Europe, and is more faſhionable than Engliſh. Beſides, a foreigner is better qualified to judge of merit in the conduct of the plot, in which the ſuperiority of the French writers is admitted, than with regard to the natural expreſſion of ſentiment and paſſion, which conſtitutes the peculiar excellence of the

the Engliſh. Thus the Italians are ſaid to look upon the *Orlando Furioſo* as their greateſt epic poem, while foreigners generally prefer the *Gieruſalemmé liberata*; becauſe the merit of the former, which conſiſts in its fine verſes, none but a native of Italy can feel; but the regularity and good conduct of the fable, which forms the chief recommendation of the latter, is perceived by every ſmatterer in the language. It was perhaps, for a ſimilar reaſon, that Euripides, was the favourite writer of tragedy among the Greeks themſelves, and that Sophocles is more commonly admired by the moderns.

Among the other differences between epic and dramatical compoſitions, we may remark, that the latter, being the ſubject of public ſpectacles, in which mankind become highly intereſted, are eaſily modified into a variety of ſhapes, to ſuit the prevailing inclination; and conſequently, they are leſs liable, by length of time, or frequent repetition, to be exhauſted, or to loſe their attractions. Of this a ſtriking inſtance occurred not long ſince in France; where, though the general ſtyle of tragedy had been long ſettled by cuſtom,

cuſtom, an entirely new ſpecies of drama, under the name of the *weeping comedy**, has been introduced; as in *cenie*, Le Pere de Famille, Le Philoſophe ſans ſcavoir, and the dramatic works of Mercier. In theſe compoſitions, by laying aſide altogether the reſtraints of verſification, together with all pomp of imagery or of expreſſion, and by founding the plot, not upon the misfortunes peculiar to princes and heroes, but upon ſuch domeſtic afflictions and calamities as are incident to the greater part of mankind, there is opened a direct avenue to the heart, equally inviting and attractive to every ſpectator. By this improvement, tragedy being ſtript of all foreign ornaments, and exhibiting a more ſimple and genuine picture of nature, is likely to excite more powerfully the movements of pity and ſympathy, and conſequently to attain more completely her proper object.

Some attempts of the ſame nature have of late been made ſucceſsfully in England,

* Comedie Larmagante.

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though in this country they are not ſo abſolutely neceſſary, as the old models, in that ſpecies of compoſition which had deviated leſs from the true ſtandard. But in Germany, where the drama has hitherto made but ſmall advances, and where the writers of this claſs are therefore, leſs hampered by former habits and prejudices, the late examples of a new compoſition in France have produced a general imitation, and have had ſuitable influence in forming the national taſte.

The end of comedy, properly ſo called, is to excite laughter; an emotion ariſing from a contraſt in the mind between certain objects of an oppoſite deſcription. Grand, ſolemn, or important objects are beheld with admiration, and with reſpect, or at leaſt with ſerious attention. Mean, light, or trivial objects appear contemptible, inſignificant, or frivolous. The ideas and ſentiments, therefore, which ariſe from theſe two ſources are ſo totally inconſiſtent and repugnant, that they cannot be blended together in our thoughts; and even when they are forced upon us in ſucceſſion, we find a difficulty in paſſing very quickly from the one to the other.

other. The reſpective impreſſions appear to contend for the preference; and while they rouſe our attention to alternate and oppoſite views, we are conſcious of an effort or ſtruggle, which occaſions the pleaſant, but ſomewhat uneaſy convulſion of laughter.

To produce this emotion, therefore, a ſudden contraſt of dignity and meanneſs is always neceſſary. But it makes no difference, whether this contraſt occur in the ſeveral parts of an idea preſented to us, or from comparing what is preſented, with ſomething ſuggeſted by the previous train of our own thoughts. Provided there be a ſudden tranſition from the one ſort of impreſſion to the other, the manner in which it is produced is of no conſequence. Even in the ordinary courſe of our thoughts, the ſudden occurrence of a light and trivial incident will frequently excite mirth. The mind paſſes readily, by a natural ſpring, from grave and ſolemn occupations, to the utmoſt levity and frivolity; but the tranſition in the oppoſite direction is more ſlow and difficult. The moſt inſignificant avocation at church will ſometimes diſcompoſe our gravity, and

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mar our devotions by an ill-timed jocularity; but in our idle amuſements, and in a playful humour, we are ſeldom provoked to laughter by the intruſion of an important and wiſe reflection*.

From the immenſe number of ideas, of different ſorts, which paſs through the mind, and frequently in rapid ſucceſſion, there cannot fail to ariſe numerous inſtances of that contraſt which tends to mirth and pleaſantry. Theſe are varied without end in the degree of their intenſity, from ſuch as produce the moſt violent horſe-laugh, to ſuch as awaken a mere ſmile that is hardly perceptible, and which may be conſidered as expreſſing little more than the ſimple feeling of pleaſure, a feeling, however, which is light and volatile, in contra-diſtinction to what is important and ſolemn.

—" Olli ſubridens pater hominumque deumque."
———" As Jupiter on Juno ſmiles,
When he impregns the clouds."

* See Akenſide's Pleaſures of Imagination. Note on Book III.

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It may not be unworthy of remark, that, as the pleaſurable convulſion of laughter ariſes not only from the influence of certain mental emotions, but alſo from the mechanical operations of corporeal objects, it is attended, in this latter caſe, with circumſtances a good deal analogous to thoſe which take place in the former. When, by the rubbing of certain irritable parts of the body, we become no longer able to ſuppreſs the riſible agitation, we are ſenſible of a conflict between oppoſite ſenſations, reſembling what ariſes from a contraſt of ideas or ſentiments; and are with difficulty able to reſiſt the attacks of pleaſure and pain, which appear alternately to obtain the ſuperiority.

Of all the examples of contraſt which are conducive to laughter, the richeſt and moſt extenſive is, that which appears in the character and manners of men. As nothing is more conſtantly the object of attention than the behaviour of our fellow-creatures, there is no ſubject which more frequently employs our judgment, and awakens our feelings. When their behaviour is conſiſtent with propri-

propriety, it excites approbation and eſteem, and is always attended with the appearance of dignity in the perſon in whom it is diſplayed. As every man wiſhes to be eſteemed by others, he endeavours on all occaſions, to exhibit ſuch a view of himſelf as will tend to that purpoſe. This we know, from experience, to be the general aim of mankind; and according to this ſtandard we examine the behaviour of each individual. When it happens, therefore, that the conduct of our fellow-creatures, inſtead of exhibiting that propriety which we look for, and which we ſuppoſe to be intended, is fooliſh, abſurd and deſpicable, and when this conduct is preſented to our view in a manner ſo unexpected as to excite ſurpriſe; it affords a ſtrong and ſudden contraſt of dignity and meanneſs, and becomes the natural object of ſcorn and ridicule.

It is unneceſſary to add, that ſuch improprieties of conduct as fall under the denomination of *crimes*, or *great vices*, are not properly ridiculous; as they do not excite contempt but indignation and reſentment; feel-

feelings which have no reſemblance to ſuch as are produced by mean or trivial objects.

The talent of exciting laughter, by the exhibition of any impropriety or abſurdity in human character and conduct, ſeems to be what is properly called *humour*; as *wit* ſeems to be the talent of exciting mirth by any contraſt which has no dependence on the behaviour of mankind.

Conſidering humour and wit as diſtinguiſhed in this manner, it muſt be evident that the former has a much greater tendency than the latter, to excite hearty and violent laughter; and conſtitutes, for that reaſon, the chief province of comedy. The ideas of dignity, which we not only refer to every rational creature, but which we ſee that he ſtill more ſtrongly refers to himſelf, renders us peculiarly ſharp-ſighted in marking every inſtance of abſurdity, weakneſs, or impropriety of which he is guilty, and diſpoſe us to exaggerate thoſe imperfections, from the ſecret gratification which our vanity obtains by diminiſhing the rank and conſequence of others. Human nature is a great laughing-

ſtock, which we are pleaſed to ſee toſſed about, and turned in all ſhapes, and with whoſe ridiculous appearance we are never tired. The pleaſure we derive from the ludicrous combinations of other objects is more ſlight and tranſitory. The fluſhes of wit excite commonly no more than a ſmile, and are not ſo much the objects of mirth, as of admiration and ſurpriſe.

From what has been obſerved, it ſhould ſeem, that, though comic writing cannot be ſucceſsfully cultivated until the liberal arts and ſciences have, in general, made conſiderable progreſs, it is likely to attain its higheſt improvement, at a period which precedes the moſt refined and correct ſtate of taſte and literature.

Among ſimple and ignorant people, it is not difficult to provoke laughter, becauſe they have too little experience and reflection to diſtinguiſh what has real dignity or meanneſs from what may aſſume the appearance of either; and becauſe they are ſo little acquainted with the various connections of objects, that any aſſemblage, in the leaſt out of the common road, is apt to ſurpriſe them. "The

" The ſimple joke that takes the ſhepherd's heart,
" Eaſily pleaſed, the long loud laugh ſincere."

THOMSON.

According as men acquire comprehenſive and liberal views of things, they become faſtidious and ſparing of their merriment. They are more diſcriminating in regard to the objects which afford the neceſſary contraſt, and they are more capable of preconceiving thoſe occaſions and ſituations which give riſe to it. A man is never much tickled with a ſtory which he has heard before, and which he diſtinctly remembers; and upon the ſame principle he is not apt to laugh heartily at thoſe pleaſantries which depend upon aſſociations already familiar to him, or which have a great ſimilarity to thoſe which he has foreſeen or imagined.

In Turkey, and in ſome other eaſtern countries, the contraſt between a tall and ſhort man is thought to be a reaſonable cauſe of laughter; and a dwarf is, therefore, a neceſſary appendage in the retinue of princes.

Falſe and inconſiſtent reaſonings which have an air of ſpecioufneſs, bulls and blunders of expreſſion, even errors of pronuncia-

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tion, or improprieties of dreſs unperceived by the wearer, are ſources of mirth and jocularity in all countries.

Among our forefathers in Europe, the behaviour of a mere idiot was viewed in a ſimilar light; and a perſon in thoſe unfortunate circumſtances was commonly kept by men of wealth, as an object of ridicule. When people become too polite to laugh at a real idiot, they ſubſtitute in his place an artificial one with a motley coat, and with a cap and bells, to imitate the behaviour of a ſimpleton, but with occaſional ſtrokes of ſhrewdneſs and ſagacity. This perſonage afforded entertainment, by appearing, according to the proverb, more knave than fool; and became at laſt a profeſſed jeſter, upon whom the family in which he lived, and their gueſts, were accuſtomed to exerciſe their talents; but who, at the ſame time, like the clown of a pantomime could ſhew by his occaſional ſallies, that he was himſelf no mean performer in the ſcene.

Perſons of education, however, becoming gradually more expert in this kind of diverſion, began to undervalue the ſtudied jokes of

of theſe pretended fools, and endeavoured to improve the entertainment by jeſting with one another, and by aſſuming upon occaſion any ſort of character which might contribute to the mirth of the company. The practice of *maſquerading*, which came to be univerſal through a great part of Europe, aroſe from this prevailing diſpoſition, and gave individuals a better opportunity of exerciſing their talents, by enabling them to uſe more freedom with each other, and to appear unexpectedly in a variety of ſituations. Such was the ſtyle of amuſement, which having prevailed in that period of European manners deſcribed by Shakeſpear, makes a conſpicuous figure in the comic works of that author. As faſhion is apt to produce fantaſtical imitation, it appears that the folly of individuals led them, in thoſe times, to aſſume or counterfeit thoſe humours in real life; an affectation which had become ſo general as to fall under the notice of the ſtage, and to produce a ridicule of the *cheating* humour, the *bragging* humour, the *melancholy* humour, the *quarrelling* humour, exhibited by Shakeſpear and Johnſon,

ſon, in the characters of Nym, of Piſtol, of Maſter Stephen, or Maſter Matthew, and the Angry Boy.

The higher advances of civilization and refinement contributed, not only to explode theſe ludicrous paſtimes which had been the delight of a former age, but even to weaken the propenſity to every ſpecies of humorous exhibition. Although humour be commonly productive of more merriment than wit, it ſeldom procures to the poſſeſſor the ſame degree of reſpect. To ſhew in a ſtrong light the follies, the defects, and the improprieties of mankind, they muſt be exhibited with peculiar colouring. To excite ſtrong ridicule, the picture muſt be changed; and the features, though like, muſt be exaggerated. The man who in converſation, aims at the diſplay of this talent, muſt endeavour to repreſent with peculiar heightening the tone, the aſpect, the geſture, the deportment of the perſon whom he ridicules. To paint folly, he muſt for the time, appear fooliſh. To exhibit oddity and abſurdity, he muſt himſelf become odd and abſurd. There is, in this attempt, ſomething low and buffooniſh;

ſooniſh; and a degree of that meanneſs which appeared in the perſon thus expoſed, is likely by a natural aſſociation, to remain with his repreſentative. The latter is beheld in the light of a player, who degrades himſelf for our entertainment, and whom nothing but the higheſt excellence in his profeſſion can ſave from our contempt.

But though the circumſtances and manners of a poliſhed nation are adverſe to the cultivation of humour, they are peculiarly calculated to promote the circulation and improvement of wit. The entertainment ariſing from the latter has no connection with thoſe humiliating circumſtances which are inſeparable from the former; but is deviated from ſuch occaſional exertions of the fancy as may be conſiſtent with the utmoſt elegance and correctneſs. The man of wit has no occaſion to perſonate folly, or to become the temporary butt of that ridicule which he means to excite. He aſſumes no groteſque attitude; he employs no buffooniſh expreſſion; nor appears in any character but his own. Unlike the man of humour, he is never prolix or tedious, but paſſing

paſſing with rapidity from one object to another, ſelects from the group whatever ſuits his purpoſe. He ſees with quickneſs thoſe happy aſſemblages, thoſe unexpected oppoſitions and reſemblances with which the imagination is delighted and ſurpriſed; and by a ſudden glance, he directs the attention to that electrical point of contact by which the enlivening ſtroke is communicated.

Perſons in the higher ſphere of life, who are exempted from manual labour, and ſpend a great part of their time in meetings of pleaſure and amuſement, are captivated by the brilliancy of this talent, and become fond of diſplaying it. By reciprocal efforts to entertain one another, and by hazarding the free exerciſe of their mental powers, their underſtandings are ſharpened, their knowledge is extended, the range of their fancy is enlarged, their conceptions become clear and lively, and they acquire a facility and command of expreſſion. As their minds are thus filled with a greater ſtore of ideas and ſentiments, and as their habits of communication are improved in proportion; their converſation is, of courſe, enriched and diver-

diverſified; it aſſumes a higher tone of ſprightlineſs and vivacity, and is more productive of thoſe new and uncommon turns of thought which are the ſources of wit and pleaſantry.

While true comedy, therefore, which is converſant in theatrical repreſentation, and which is poſſeſſed of the higher powers of ridicule, experiences the diſcouraging influence of refined and elegant manners, it is apt, in moſt countries, to be ſucceeded by a kindred ſpecies of compoſition, more airy and volatile, but leſs forcible; which is equally calculated to exhibit the mere playfulneſs of a ſportive imagination, and to become the pointed inſtrument of ſatire and invective.

It may, however, be remarked that the diſplay of comic humour, in any country, will depend very much on the varieties which occur in the characters of the inhabitants. According to the diverſity which prevails in the real characters of mankind, more numerous inſtances of impropriety and abſurdity will ariſe, and a wider field of ridicule will be preſented to thoſe who have the capacity to make uſe of it.

One

One of the chief cauſes of this diverſity is the advancement of commerce and manufactures, and the conſequent ſeparation and multiplication of trades and profeſſions. In commercial and manufacturing countries, all the active and induſtrious part of the inhabitants, that is, the great body of the people are divided and ſubdivided, by an endleſs variety of occupations, which produce correſponding differences, in their education and habits, in their ſentiments and opinions, and even in the configuration of their bodies as well as in the temper and diſpoſition of their minds.

It alſo merits attention, that the ſame varieties in character and ſituation, which furniſh the materials of humour and ridicule, diſpoſe mankind to employ them for the purpoſe of exciting mirth. The ſtandard of dignity and propriety is different according to the character of the man who holds it, and is therefore contraſted with different improprieties and foibles. Every perſon, though he may not be ſo conceited as to conſider himſelf in the light of a perfect model,

is

is yet apt to be diverted with the apparent oddity of that behaviour which is very different from his own. Men of robuſt profeſſions, the ſmith, the maſon, and the carpenter, are apt to break their jeſts upon the weakneſs and effeminacy of the barber, the weaver, or the taylor. The poet, or the philoſopher in his garret, condemns the patient induſtry, and the ſordid purſuits of the merchant. The ſilent, myſterious, practitioner in phyſic, is apt to ſmile at the no leſs formal but clamorous oſtentation of the barriſter. The genteel military man, who is hired, at the nod of his ſuperior, to drive his fellow-creatures out of this world, is ready to ſneer at the zeal, and ſtarch-deportment of the Divine, whoſe profeſſion leads him to provide for their condition and enjoyments in the next. The peculiarities of each individual are thus beheld through a mirror, which magnifies their ludicrous features, and by continually exciting that "itching to deride," of which all mankind are poſſeſſed, affords conſtant exerciſe to their humorous talents.

Rude

Rude and barbarous nations are placed in oppoſite circumſtances. They have no ſuch diviſion of labour as gives riſe to ſeparate employments and profeſſions, but are engaged, promiſcuouſly and ſucceſſively, in all thoſe kinds of work with which they are acquainted. Having all, therefore, the ſame purſuits and occupations, and conſequently the ſame objects of attention, they undergo a ſimilar education and diſcipline, and acquire ſimilar habits and ways of thinking. From the accounts of travellers and hiſtorians, we accordingly find, that however ſuch people may happen to be diſtinguiſhed by ſingular inſtitutions and whimſical cuſtoms, they diſcover a wonderful uniformity in the general outline of their character and manners; an uniformity no leſs remarkable in different nations the moſt remote from each other, than in the different individuals of the ſame tribe or nation. As barbarians and ſavages have, at the ſame time, little opportunity for cultivating the powers of imagination, they are apt to be no leſs deſtitute of the inclination, than of the materials, for the exerciſe of humour. They have,

have, it is ſaid, no turn for mirth and pleaſantry. Their aſpect is gloomy and ſevere. Their complexion, aduſt, and melancholy.

From the different circumſtances attending the cultivation of the arts in different countries we may diſcover, in the article now under conſideration, ſome varieties that ſeem worthy of notice. Among the ancient Greek ſtates, the advancement of commerce and manufactures was, doubtleſs, much inferior to that which, during the preſent century, has taken place in modern Europe. But even ſo far as it went, its effects, in occaſioning a diverſity of characters among the people, were limited by the inſtitution of domeſtic ſlavery, which was puſhed to a great extent. The character of a ſlave, whatever be the employment in which he is engaged, muſt always be affected by his degrading ſituation, and by the arbitrary treatment to which he is expoſed. "The world is not his friend, nor the world's law." It is no wonder that he ſhould endeavour to elude thoſe rules of juſtice, which appear to be eſtabliſhed for the advantage merely of the free people, and from the benefit of which

which he is totally excluded. It is no wonder that he ſhould ſtudy to over-reach an unfeeling maſter, by whom he is regarded as no better than a brute animal, and denied the common rights and privileges of humanity; or that he ſhould boil with indignation and reſentment at thoſe injuries to which he is continually ſubjected, and, when reſtrained by fear from expreſſing a ſenſe of his wrongs, ſhould be diſpoſed to treaſure up vengeance againſt his cruel oppreſſors. The greater part of ſlaves, therefore, are unable to reſiſt the powerful contagion of the vices which are engendered in their miſerable and humiliating circumſtances; and the entire deſtruction of their morals is not the leaſt injury of which they have reaſon to complain. In all ages and countries they diſcover nearly the ſame temper and diſpoſitions—jealous, vindictive, and cruel; weak, fickle, and puſillanimous; cunning, ſelfiſh, and diſhoneſt.

As in the moſt commercial of the Greek ſtates, almoſt all the departments of trade and manufactures, and even many of thoſe which

which in modern times are accounted liberal, were filled with ſlaves, the uniformity of character ſo prevalent in that claſs of men, was, in a great meaſure, extended to the whole body of the people, and produced a proportional deficiency of thoſe objects which afford the chief materials, as well as the chief excitements of humour and ridicule. This was probably the reaſon why the Athenians, notwithſtanding their eminence in all the other productions of genius, diſcover ſo remarkable a deficiency in comic or ludicrous compoſitions. The comedies of Ariſtophanes, written at a period when the nation had attained a high pitch of civilization, are mere farces, deriving the whole of their pleaſantry, not from nicely diſcriminated and well-ſupported characters, but from the droll and extravagant ſituations in which the perſons of the drama are exhibited. It is true that the ſtyle of what is called the *new comedy*, is ſaid to have been very different; but of this we can form no judgment, unleſs from the tranſlations or imitations of it by Plautus and Terence; from

which

which the originals, in the article which we are now conſidering, do not appear in a very favourable light.

The comedies of thoſe two Roman writers are alſo very deficient in the repreſentation of character. An old avaricious father, a diſſolute extravagant ſon, a flattering parasite, a bragging cowardly ſoldier, a cunning intriguing raſcal of a ſlave; theſe, with a few trifling variations, make the *dramatis perſonæ* in all the different compoſitions of thoſe authors. But though neither Plautus nor Terence appear to have much merit in deſcribing thoſe nice combinations of affectation and folly, which may be regarded as the foundation of true comedy, they ſeem happy in the expreſſion of common feelings, and in exhibiting natural pictures of ordinary life.

The Romans, independent of their cloſe imitation of the Greeks, had ſcarce any comic writing of their own. After the deſtruction of the commonwealth, we meet with few writers in this department; and none of any eminence. The age of elegant literature at Rome was very ſhort: there was

was no commerce: the number of ſlaves was immenſe, as no free citizen would engage in any profeſſion but thoſe of the camp or the bar; and therefore it is probable that the Romans were ſtill more deficient, than the Greeks, in that variety of original characters which is the great ſpur to ridicule.

In modern Italy, the riſe of mercantile towns was followed by the revival of letters, and by the introduction of ludicrous and ſomewhat licentious compoſitions; but the Italians loſt their trade, and their literature began to decline, before it had riſen to that height at which the improvement of comedy was to be expected. They diſplayed, however, in a ſort of pantomimic entertainments, a vein of low humour, by groteſque exhibitions, which are ſuppoſed to characterize the citizens of different ſtates; and in this inferior ſpecies of drama, they are ſaid to poſſeſs irreſiſtible powers of exciting laughter.

In France, the country which, after Italy made the firſt advances in civilization, the ſtate of ſociety has never been very favourable to humorous repreſentation. In that

that country, the faſhion has had more influence, than in any other part of Europe to ſuppreſs the oddities and excentricities of individuals. The gentry, by their frequent intercourſe, are induced to model their behaviour according to a common ſtandard; and the lower orders think it incumbent upon them to imitate the gentry. Thus a greater degree of uniformity of character and behaviour is propagated through all ranks, from the higheſt to the loweſt; and a French beggar is a gentleman in rags. Individuals, at this rate, have little temptation to laugh at each other; for this would be nearly the ſame thing as to laugh at themſelves. From refinement of manners, at the ſame time, their attention has been directed to elegant ſallies of pleaſantry, more than to ludicrous and buffooniſh repreſentation; and the nation has at length come to occupy the ſuperior regions of wit, without paſſing through the thicker and more vulgar medium of humour.

It may, accordingly, be remarked, that among the numerous and diſtinguiſhed men

of genius whom France has produced, Le Sage, and Moliere, are perhaps the only examples that can be adduced of eminent humourous writers. The high and deſerved reputation of the latter, as a writer of comedy, is univerſally admitted; though I think it can hardly be denied, that his characters are commonly overcharged and farcical.

There is, perhaps, no country in which manufactures and commerce have been ſo far extended as in England, or conſequently in which the inhabitants have diſplayed ſuch a multiplicity and diverſity of characters. What is called a *humouriſt*, that is, a perſon who exhibits particular whims and oddities, not for the ſake of producing mirth, but to gratify his own inclination, is leſs known in any other country. The Engliſh are regarded by their neighbours as a nation of humouriſts; a ſet of originals, moulded into ſingular ſhapes, and as unlike the reſt of mankind as each other.

Political reaſoners have aſcribed this wonderful diverſity of character among the Engliſh

Engliſh to the form of their government, which impoſes few reſtraints upon their conduct. It is obvious, however, that, though an abſolute government may prevent any great ſingularity of behaviour, a free conſtitution will not alone produce it. Men do not acquire an odd or whimſical character, becauſe they are at liberty to do ſo, but becauſe they have propenſities which lead them to it. In the republican ſtates of antiquity, which enjoyed more political freedom, and among mere ſavages, who are almoſt under no government at all, nothing of this remarkable excentricity is to be obſerved.

But, whatever be the cauſe of that endleſs diverſity of characters which prevails in England, it certainly gives encouragement to ſarcaſtic mirth and drollery, and has produced a general diſpoſition to humour and raillery, which is the more conſpicuous from the natural modeſty, reſerve, and taciturnity of the people. In delineating the moſt unaccountable and ſtrange appearances of human nature, they require not the aid of fiction; to conceive what is ridiculous,

they have only to obſerve it. Each individual, according to the expreſſion of a famous buffoon, is not only humourous in himſelf, but the cauſe of humour in other men. The national genius, as might be expected, has been moulded and directed by theſe peculiar circumſtances, and has produced a greater number of eminent writers, in all the branches of comic and ludicrous compoſition, than are to be found in any other country. To paſs over the extraordinary genius of Shakeſpeare, in this as well as in other departments, with thoſe other comic writers who lived about the commencement of Engliſh manufactures; and to mention only a few inſtances, near our own times, it will be difficult for any country, at one period, to match the ſevere and pointed irony of Swift; the lighter, but more laughable ſatire of Arbuthnot; the gentle raillery of Gay; the ludicrous and natural, though coarſe, repreſentations of low life, by Fielding; the ſtrong delineations of character, together with the appropriate eaſy dialogue of Vanburgh; the rich vein of correct pleaſantry, in ridiculing the va-

rieties

rieties of ſtudied affectation, diſplayed by Congreve; and, above all, the univerſal, equable, and creative humour of Addiſon.

It cannot, however, eſcape obſervation, that the number of adventurers in this province, has of late been greatly diminiſhed; and few of them have riſen to eminence. With all the partiality which national prepoſſeſſion can inſpire, we are unable to name above one comic writer of the preſent day, who deſerves to be mentioned along with his illuſtrious predeceſſors. Our late theatrical exhibitions, under the title of comedy, are, for the moſt part, either decent and regular, but cold and ſpiritleſs performances, or poor farces, interlarded with common place ſentiment, and often accompanied by muſic, which creates a ſort of intereſt with the greater part of an audience.

Whether this alteration is merely accidental, or proceeds from permanent cauſes; whether it is produced by the mere love of novelty, or by a general decline in the powers of exciting laughter, it is not eaſy to determine. That the preſent deficiency of talents may originate in permanent circumſtances,

cumſtances, depending upon gradual changes in the ſtate of ſociety, is far from being improbable. Though, in a country where trade and manufactures continue to flouriſh, the diviſions of labour are endleſs, yet the new profeſſions to which they give occaſion come, at length, to be ſo minutely ſeparated from each other, as to produce very little peculiarity of temper or diſpoſition in thoſe who exerciſe them. The perſon who rounds the head, and he who ſharpens the point of a pin, though labouring in ſeparate departments, preſent nothing different to the view of the comic obſerver. The field of humour and ridicule, therefore, ceaſes to encreaſe; while, by conſtant employment, it may be worn out and exhauſted.

On the other hand, it cannot be doubted, that the inhabitants of this iſland, though they have long retained the "veſtigia ruris," are now, from an intercourſe with their neighbours, and in the natural courſe of things, laying aſide their former prejudices, and advancing with rapidity in all thoſe refinements which contribute to the embelliſhment of ſociety; and it may be expected

that

that when they attain a certain pitch of elegance and correctneſs of manners, they will become leſs deſirous of figuring in the walks of humourous repreſentation. Whether they are likely to become eminent in wit, in proportion as they decline in humour, may ſtill be a queſtion. There may be ſome reaſon to apprehend, that their application to ſerious buſineſs will preſerve that ſaturnine complexion by which they have long been diſtinguiſhed, and prevent their acquiring that quickneſs and flexibility of imagination, that never-failing vivacity and pleaſantry, which are ſo conſpicuous in their more volatile neighbours.

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THE END.

ERRATA.

The Binder is desired to cut off the Advertisement from the Title Sheet of Vol. I. and place it after the Title to Vol. III.

Vol. III. Chap. 4. page 227, *for* Sect. 3, *read* Sect. 2.

——————— 280, *for* Sect. 4, *read* Sect. 3.

There is an error in the running title of Vol. III. from page 97 to 151, and from page 225 to 239.

Vol. IV. *for* Chap. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, *read* Essay 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

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